

Official Report of the
One Hundred Fifty-fourth
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 7 and 8, 1984

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THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 7, 1984, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 7 and 8, 1984. The general priesthood meeting was held in the Tabernacle on Saturday, April 7, 1984 at 6:00 P.M.

President Spencer W. Kimball attended three sessions of the conference and watched the other sessions on television in his apartment in the Hotel Utah. President Marion G. Romney, First Counselor in the First Presidency, watched the conference on television in his home because of ill health. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday morning sessions. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of some of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. The general sessions and the priesthood session were also carried via satellite transmission to more than 650 stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately 892 locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: Spencer W. Kimball,¹ Gordon B. Hinckley.

The Council of the Twelve: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, and Russell M. Nelson.²

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Presidents: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, G. Homer Durham, and Richard G. Scott. *Additional Members of the Seventy:* Marion D. Hanks, A. Theodore Tuttle, Franklin D. Richards, Theodore M. Burton, Paul H. Dunn, Hartman Rector, Jr., Loren C. Dunn, Robert L. Simpson, Rex D. Pinegar, Wm. Grant Bangerter, Robert D. Hales, Adney Y. Komatsu, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Gene R. Cook, Charles Didier, William R. Bradford, George P. Lee, John H. Groberg, Jacob de Jager, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Robert E. Wells, James M. Paramore, Hugh W. Pinnock, F. Enzo Busche, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Ronald E. Poelman, Derek A. Cuthbert, Robert L. Backman, Rex C. Reeve, Sr., F. Burton Howard, Ted E. Brewerton, Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., Angel Abrea, John K. Carmack, Russell Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, and Philip T. Sonntag.

¹President Marion G. Romney was excused due to ill health.

²Dallin H. Oaks, sustained Saturday morning as a new member of the Twelve, was out of the city and so was excused.

The Presiding Bishopric: Victor L. Brown, H. Burke Peterson, and J. Richard Clarke.

Emeritus General Authorities: Eldred G. Smith, Sterling W. Sill, Henry D. Taylor, Bernard P. Brockbank, James A. Cullimore, Joseph Anderson, and John H. Vandenberg.³

Other authorities present

Other authorities of the Church in attendance included Regional Representatives, presidents of stakes and their counselors, presidents of temples, bishops of wards, and presidencies and members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthood quorums.

Many general, stake, and ward auxiliary officers also attended.

FIRST DAY MORNING MEETING

FIRST SESSION

The first general session of the 154th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 7, 1984, at 10:00 A.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The music for the opening session was provided by the Tabernacle Choir with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

Prior to the meeting the Tabernacle Choir sang "Praise the Lord with Heart and Voice" without announcement.

President Hinckley then made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We deeply regret that President Spencer W. Kimball is unable to be with us this morning. He is in his apartment in the Hotel Utah, where he will watch the conference on television.

We also regret the absence of President Marion G. Romney, First

Counselor in the First Presidency. He has asked to be excused and will watch the conference proceedings on television at his home.

We welcome all who are participating in the conference this morning, whether seated here in the Tabernacle or in the overflow session in the nearby Assembly Hall where Elders Royden G. Derrick and Rex C. Reeve, Sr., preside; or who are participating by satellite transmission, radio, or television. The proceedings are being carried to over six hundred and fifty stake centers throughout the United States and Canada where members of the Church are assembled.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church and the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies and the Activities Committee who are seated on the stand. We also extend a special welcome to government, education, and civic leaders who are present.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened the conference by singing "Praise the Lord with Heart

³O. Leslie Stone was excused because he was out of town.

and Voice," and they will now sing "Behold, the Tabernacle of God." Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Behold, the Tabernacle of God."

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., offered the invocation.

President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved associates in the work of the Lord, this is truly a world conference, with the restored gospel now taught in some ninety nations. It is a wonderful and a marvelous thing that has come to pass. The work is moving forward. It will continue to grow and spread over the earth, for it is the work of God, restored in this the dispensation of the fulness of times, that the purposes of the Almighty in behalf of his sons and daughters might be accomplished.

The Lord's prophet

This work is a great and important part of his grand, eternal plan. It is the Church of Jesus Christ. It bears his name. He stands at the head; we are but his servants. Our desire is to do his will: to be sensitive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, and then to go forward with faith to accomplish whatever he has commanded. He has placed a prophet on the earth. Though he is advanced in age, he is the prophet of the Lord, and he will be with us for so long as the Lord wills. And as the Lord's appointed servant, no major decision concerning this work will be made without his consideration and his direction. As we begin this conference, we shall take care of several items of business according to his expressed will and consent.

Releases of Relief Society and Young Women

There is a principle followed in the Church of rotating responsibilities. Inherent in a call to serve is a release, to be expected and welcomed after service well performed. In that spirit we extend honorable releases to the following: Sister Barbara B. Smith as president of the Relief Society, together with her counselors, Sister Marian R. Boyer and Sister Ann Reese, and all members of the Relief Society General Board; Sister Elaine A. Cannon as president of the Young Women, together with her counselors, Arlene B. Darger and Norma B. Smith, and members of the Young Women board. These women have performed a remarkable work during the years they have served. They have given countless hours of time, have given of their means and of their strength, have traveled far and wide without regard for personal convenience, all in furthering the work of the Lord. They retire now with our love and blessing, and we pray that the Lord will continue to pour out his Spirit upon them and upon their families and their homes. All who wish to join in an expression of appreciation to these beloved sisters for their dedicated, effective service may now do so by the uplifted hand.

Twelve and Seventies

As you know, there are two vacancies in the Council of the Twelve

Saturday, April 7

First Day

Apostles, incident to the passing of Elder LeGrand Richards and Elder Mark E. Petersen. We shall take action to fill these vacancies this morning, and we shall also add to the First Quorum of the Seventy.

In the case of the Seventy, we are putting into effect the practice long generally followed and accepted in the Church with reference to other offices. Members of the First Quorum of the Seventy are General Authorities in every sense: in calling, in responsibility, in power and authority. Theirs have been permanent appointments, and those presently serving will continue so to serve. However, tenure of appointment is not important insofar as the work is concerned. Calls to serve as bishop, stake president, Regional Representative, mission president, temple president, and president of the auxiliary organizations are for a period of years. The individual is then honorably released and others are afforded the opportunity of service. After much prayerful consideration, we have called six men, mature and tested through long years of service, to become members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, to serve for periods of three to five years, just as a mission president or temple president would do, and then to be released with honor and appreciation. While they so serve, they will be General Authorities with every right, power, and authority necessary to function. They will be expected to give their full time to this work while they are in office. This procedure, we feel, will provide a constant infusion of new talent and a much widened opportunity for men of ability and faith to serve in these offices.

Sustaining of General Authorities and general officers

I shall now present to you the names of the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your vote.

It is proposed that we sustain President Spencer W. Kimball as

prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, by the same sign.

Marion G. Romney as First Counselor in the First Presidency, and Gordon B. Hinckley as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. All in favor, please signify it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as President of the Council of the Twelve, Elder Ezra Taft Benson. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign.

As the Council of the Twelve Apostles: Ezra Taft Benson, Howard W. Hunter, Thomas S. Monson, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, Bruce R. McConkie, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, and Dallin H. Oaks. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

With reference to Dallin Oaks, I should like to say that while we nominate and sustain him today, he will not be ordained to the apostleship, nor will he be set apart as a member of the Council of the Twelve, nor will he begin his apostolic service, until after he completes his present judicial commitments, which may require several weeks. He is absent from the city, and necessarily absent from the conference. We excuse him.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

As the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy: J. Thomas Fyans, Carlos E. Asay, M. Russell Ballard, Dean L. Larsen, Royden G. Derrick, G. Homer Durham, and Richard G. Scott. As the new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, previously referred to: John K. Carmack, Russell C. Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, and Philip T. Sonntag. And all

the other members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, and the emeritus Brethren as at present constituted. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

The Relief Society: Barbara Ann Woodhead Winder as president. The Young Women: Ardeth Greene Kapp as president. All in favor, please manifest it. Those opposed, by the same sign. I should say that these calls have come just very recently—a matter of hours—to these women, and they will have more time to select their counselors and members of their boards.

All of the other general officers and boards as at present constituted. All in favor, manifest it. Contrary, by the same sign.

It appears to me that the voting has been unanimous in favor of the General Authorities and these general officers.

New temples announced

I mention to you another matter. We announced this morning the con-

struction of five new temples, to be built in Bogotá, Colombia; San Diego, California; Portland, Oregon; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. We met earlier at 7:30 this morning with officers of the stakes in these areas, and all expressed their enthusiastic support of these undertakings.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We shall ask the Brethren and sisters who have been newly called to take their places on the stand, the women over here and the new Seventies here. That will be a long walk for some of them.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "How Wondrous and Great." We shall then be pleased to hear from President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "How Wondrous and Great."

President Ezra Taft Benson

Take gospel to the world

Ten years ago President Spencer W. Kimball stood at this pulpit. In that conference, he was sustained by Saints throughout the world as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In the decade of his leadership that has followed, we have seen progress and growth unequaled in the history of the Church.

In his first conference address as President of the Church, President Kimball declared the program of the Church is "to reaffirm and boldly carry forward the work of God in cleanliness, uprightness, and to take that gospel of

truth to that world that needs so much that godly life" (*Ensign*, May 1974, p. 8).

My message today is to provide counsel on how we as a church and as individuals can carry forward the work of God to all the world.

Strengthen families

First, we need to strengthen families.

We must recognize that the family is the cornerstone of civilization and that no nation will rise above the caliber of its homes. The family is the rock foundation of the Church. We therefore

call on the head of every household to strengthen the family.

We believe marriage was ordained by God for a wise, eternal purpose. The family is the basis of the righteous life. Divinely prescribed roles of father, mother, and children were given from the very beginning.

God established that fathers are to preside in the home. Fathers are to provide, love, teach, and direct.

A mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, bear, nourish, love, and train. They are to be helpmates, and are to counsel with their husbands.

Parents' responsibility

There is no inequality between the sexes in God's plan. It is a matter of division of responsibility.

Children are likewise counseled in holy writ in their duty to parents:

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

"Honour thy father and mother; [which is the first commandment with promise;]

"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3), said the Apostle Paul.

When parents, in companionship, love, and unity, fulfill their heaven-imposed responsibility and children respond with love and obedience, great joy is the result.

Spiritually strengthen families

Recently a letter came to me from a member of the Church describing some of the difficulties and challenges that a husband and his wife were having in rearing their children.

They were married in the temple, but subsequently drifted into inactivity. They had only recently become active again in Church responsibility. They asked for personal counsel as to what they might do to ensure that their children would remain faithful to the gospel and avoid some of the pitfalls that

they had experienced and had seen come to other families.

In other words, they were asking, "How can we spiritually strengthen our family?"

I would invite each of you to ponder that significant question. As a response to this request, I would further invite you to consider the tried and tested formula that successful families have used over the years to attain love, unity, and loyalty to one another and to understand the principles of the gospel.

Love, respect, communication

Successful families have love and respect for each family member. Family members know they are loved and appreciated. Children feel they are loved by their parents. Thus, they are secure and self-assured.

Strong families cultivate an attribute of effective communication. They talk out their problems, make plans together, and cooperate toward common objectives. Family home evening and family councils are practiced and used as effective tools toward this end.

Fathers and mothers in strong families stay close to their children. They talk. Some fathers formally interview each child, others do so informally, and others take occasion to regularly spend time alone with each child.

Provide wholesome influences

Every family has problems and challenges. But successful families try to work together toward solutions instead of resorting to criticism and contention. They pray for each other, discuss, and give encouragement. Occasionally these families fast together in support of one of the family members.

Strong families support each other.

Successful families do things together: family projects, work, vacations, recreation, and reunions.

Successful parents have found that it is not easy to rear children in an environment polluted with evil. Therefore, they take deliberate steps to provide the best of wholesome influences. Moral principles are taught. Good books are made available and read. Television watching is controlled. Good and uplifting music is provided. But most importantly, the scriptures are read and discussed as a means to help develop spiritual-mindedness.

Tried and proven formula

In successful Latter-day Saint homes, parents teach their children to understand faith in God, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. (See D&C 68:25.)

Family prayer is a consistent practice in these families. Prayer is the means to acknowledge appreciation for blessings and to humbly recognize dependence on Almighty God for strength, sustenance, and support.

It is a wise and true maxim that families that kneel together stand upright before the Lord!

This, then, is the tried and proven formula for rearing successful families. I commend the formula to you.

As parents and grandparents in Zion, it has been the shared hope of my wife and me that all of us will be together in the eternities—that all will be worthy, without a single empty chair.

That is my fervent hope and prayer for each family in the Church.

Now may I direct some remarks to us as members of the Church individually.

New editions of standard works

More than at any time in our history, brothers and sisters, we have need for greater spirituality. The way to develop greater spirituality is to feast on the words of Christ as revealed in the scriptures.

One of the most significant happenings in recent Church history is the publication of the new editions of the

standard works with the new footnotes and other helps.

I think we can say without exaggeration that never before in any dispensation have the Saints been so abundantly blessed with the words of the Lord and His prophets.

For your profit and learning

Now our challenge is to do as the Lord commanded: "Study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men" (D&C 11:22).

This year we are to read the Book of Mormon in the adult curriculum of the Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith said of this sacred record: "The Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], p. 194).

We urge you to study the Book of Mormon as individuals and families and then to do as the prophet Nephi counseled: liken the scriptures to yourselves so that it will be for your profit and learning. (See 1 Nephi 19:23–24.)

We have requested priesthood leaders to minimize administrative meetings on the Sabbath so that families may engage in worship and family time. Our hope is that you will use this time to attend your meetings, render Christian service, visit family members, hold family home evenings, and study the scriptures.

Accept callings and give service

We counsel you to accept callings in the Church and to serve faithfully in the positions to which you are called. Serve one another. Magnify your callings. As you do so, you will be the means of blessing others and you will increase in spirituality.

We urge you, particularly priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters, to be sensitive to the needs of the

poor, the sick, and the needy. We have a Christian responsibility to see that the widows and fatherless are assisted. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Keep the commandments

We urge you to keep the commandments of God. By so doing, you will keep yourself free from the bondage of sin.

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ . . . serve him" (D&C 59:5).

Confess the hand of God in all things. (See D&C 59:21.)

"Be patient in afflictions" (D&C 24:8).

"Be of good cheer" (D&C 61:36).

Sustain and support the priesthood in the home and Church. (See D&C 107:22.)

Pay an honest tithe and a generous fast offering. (See D&C 119:4; Mosiah 4:21.)

"Love thy neighbor as thyself" (D&C 59:6).

Teach your children. Bring them up in light and truth. (See D&C 93:40, 42-43.)

"Cease to find fault one with another" (D&C 88:124).

"Forgive one another" (D&C 64:9).

Elect honest, good, and wise men to public office. (See D&C 98:10.)

Obey and befriend "that law which is the constitutional law of the land" (D&C 98:6).

Be thrifty. Stay out of debt. (See D&C 19:35.)

Do not covet. (See D&C 88:123.)

Be honest in your dealings with others. (See D&C 51:9.)

Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (See D&C 59:10, 12-13.)

Abstain from the use of liquor, tobacco, and strong and hot drinks. (See D&C 89:5-9.)

"Cease to be unclean"; shun pornography (D&C 88:124).

Seek learning out of the best books. (See D&C 88:118.) Avoid literature and movies which portray evil as good and good as evil.

Do not commit adultery "nor do anything like unto it" (D&C 59:6). That means petting, fornication, homosexuality, and any other form of immorality.

"Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (D&C 121:45).

"Practice virtue and holiness" continually (D&C 38:24).

"Clothe yourselves with the bond of charity" (D&C 88:125).

Live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 98:11.)

Be valiant in your testimony of Christ. (See D&C 76:51, 79.)

Honor your covenants. (See D&C 25:13.)

"Endure to the end" (D&C 14:7).

In a word, though you live in the world, be not of the world!

The mission of the Church

The mission of the Church is to save souls by proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead.

We urge you to do all within your talent and means to help build the kingdom of God on the earth. Always strive to sustain, support, and do what is best for the kingdom of God.

We commend you!

Finally, a word of commendation and encouragement.

Over forty years ago President Kimball and I were called to be members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. We were ordained Apostles only a few minutes apart.

When we came into the Council, there were 146 stakes. Today there are 1,460—over 800 of which have been organized since President Kimball became President.

The number of members in 1943 was less than a million. Today we exceed five million. Almost two million have become members in the last ten years.

The Church has never been in a better position than at present. There are more devoted members than ever before. Missionary work has caused us to rapidly expand throughout the world. Genealogical and temple work has significantly increased. Leadership has improved. Our youth are more spiritually prepared than ever before.

We are pleased with the activation of many of our brethren and sisters. We encourage priesthood and auxiliary leaders to continue this great effort.

Latter-day Saints, we commend you! We commend your faithfulness. Never have our opportunities and our blessings been so great. In the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage . . . and on, on to victory!" (D&C 128:22).

Heritage from the Lord

Some of our members have become disturbed because of derogatory things said about the Church and its leaders, or because of misrepresentations about our doctrines or our practices.

But opposition is not new to the Church. We have had opposition in the past, and we shall continue to have opposition in the future. Do not become discouraged by what others say or do. Stay on the strait and narrow path. You do this by holding fast to the iron rod—the words of God as contained in the scriptures and as given by His living servants on this earth.

I carry with me a statement of the Lord from the Book of Mormon, which my brethren of the Twelve have

heard me quote. The passage reads as follows:

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall revile against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (3 Nephi 22:17).

Fervent prayer to bless good men and women

Brothers and sisters, this is the work of the Lord. This is His church on the earth. He has entrusted His church to the care of humble men, who have extraordinary responsibilities. We need your faith, your support, and your constant prayers.

I testify to you that God lives and that today He communicates to His servants His will. President Spencer W. Kimball is his chosen prophet on earth today. I testify that this is the Church of Jesus Christ—the kingdom of God on this earth.

I pray most earnestly that God's favor and blessing will be on you, your families, and good men and women the world over, for we all are children of one Father.

To this I testify and leave my blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Truth Eternal" without announcement.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, has just addressed us, followed by the Choir singing "Truth Eternal."

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Unusual response

A few weeks ago while in Idaho reorganizing a stake presidency, I not only met some outstanding priesthood leaders and set three of them apart as a new stake presidency, but I also met a very special young lady I will not soon forget. The newly called presidency, one of whom was serving as a bishop at the time, asked if I could interview a prospective bishop so if he were cleared he could be installed the following Sunday after conference. The appointment was made. I sat in a private office with a well-groomed, attractive couple.

After a few words of greeting and introductions, I looked at her and said, "Tell me about your husband." She hesitated and finally said, "Elder Ashton, I really don't know him very well." Since this was a most unusual response, I promptly said, "Please tell me about that." She responded with, "We have only been married three weeks."

This young couple, both in their early thirties, he an attorney and she a school teacher by profession, were still honeymooning, and their deep, newly found love for each other was most evident. When I said, "I want to talk to the two of you about your husband becoming a bishop," she said, "Some nights ago I had a dream indicating Randy would be a bishop. I just hoped it wouldn't come too soon." She continued with, "Even though we are newlyweds [and incidentally, they told me the reason they had waited until their thirties to marry was because they had spent a long time finding each other] if you are impressed to call Randy to be a bishop, he will be a good one, and I will help him."

Respect and appreciation for good women

What a beautiful attitude. What sustaining support. Her commitment to

her husband, Church, and self was made long before I asked my questions. She had resolved to choose the good part, reminding me of the meaningful statement made about Mary in Luke 10:42: "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The more I become involved in the Church and in communities worldwide, the greater becomes my appreciation and respect for good women. Today I would like to pay sincere tribute and give encouragement to these special ladies. My personal definition of a good woman is any woman who is moving in the right direction. I humbly thank God constantly for their courage, strength, and commitment. Through you noble sisters, each in different circumstances in life, by your example, encouragement, conduct, and personal integrity, God's work goes forward with greater purpose and accomplishment.

Single women in the Church

Let me share with you some recent experiences, correspondence, and observations, particularly with the single women in the Church. Most of them are doing well in the situations in which they find themselves. They, however, sincerely need our love, encouragement, and respect. They, along with all of the rest of us, need not be resigned to their present status or role. Eternal progression is a basic part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Happiness, enthusiasm, and joy in daily living are mandatory if we would move forward and choose the good part.

The principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ will never change, but environment, circumstances, institutions, and cultural patterns do. Our challenge is to move forward in our present realms with commitment and enthusiasm. We must do our part to progress

and enjoy life while we are in the process of meeting our situations.

The mother of a Filipino missionary recently wrote to her son's mission president: "Thank you so much for the spiritual support and counsel that you give to my son. . . . Being a lone parent for almost eight years would have been very hard for me, were it not for the gospel's truthfulness. I know God lives and He loves me. He hears and answers my earnest and sincere prayers. I still have seven children, including our missionary, under my care. The Lord has blessed me with a talent that has helped me through the years to support my family. I earn a living by serving as a dressmaker. I'm indeed grateful for my 'Church family'—members who have inspired me and helped me to accept cheerfully and confidently my single parenthood."

Here is a sister who has learned that God is well pleased with families of one or more if they include Him and adhere to His teachings.

Oh, how powerful are good women who choose the good part.

Use power of choice wisely

And although He will always be at our side if we will but invite Him, never will He take from His children the great gift of agency—the power to choose. Young mothers (single or otherwise) must learn to use this power wisely. There may be times when more than one course of action is placed before us. Each is right. It is then that wise and prudent decisions must be made, taking into consideration the season of life and the pertinent facts.

Some mothers seem to have the capacity and energy to make their children's clothes, bake, give piano lessons, go to Relief Society, teach Sunday School, attend parent-teacher association meetings, and so on. Other mothers look upon such women as models and feel inadequate, depressed, and think they are failures when they make comparisons.

We should not allow ourselves to be trapped into such damaging inferiority feelings. This is another tool of Satan. Many seem to put too much pressure on themselves to be a "supermom" or "superwoman."

Choose the best way

Sisters, do not allow yourselves to be made to feel inadequate or frustrated because you cannot do everything others seem to be accomplishing. Rather, each should assess her own situation, her own energy, and her own talents, and then choose the best way to mold her family into a team, a unit that works together and supports each other. Only you and your Father in Heaven know your needs, strengths, and desires. Around this knowledge your personal course must be charted and your choices made.

Let me share another example of a courageous single mother who has chosen the good part and effectively lives within her situation. She is in her mid-thirties and has suffered much heartache in her life. Shortly after she and her husband were married in the temple, he became inactive. This man chose to spend most of his time with male companions. There was no concern for the welfare of his family nor any desire to build a meaningful relationship with his wife. Church activities became nonexistent in his life, and soon he was led down the path of transgression.

Of necessity this lovely woman is providing financially for herself and her children. Her paramount goal is to make a happy home environment in which her boys and girls can feel emotional, financial, and spiritual security. For ten years their home was deprived of these ingredients of happiness.

Even though she hopes that marriage may come again sometime in the future, for the present she is concerned with the needs of her children and is working to build a strong family unit centered around the Church and its teachings.

As a single parent she has chosen the good part.

In times of hurt and discouragement, it may be consoling for her and for all of us to recall that no one can do anything permanently to us that will last for eternity. Only we ourselves can affect our eternal progression.

"Live richly, fully, joyfully"

There is a temptation on the part of some of our sisters who have never married to give up, to stop trying, to think of what they don't have in life instead of what they do have. It is important for them to never give up, to never cease living. As Sister Carol Clark has so beautifully stated: "The personal challenge is not to wait successfully but to live richly, fully, joyfully. The goal is not to wait for the right person but to *be* the right person" (*A Singular Life: Perspectives for the Single Woman* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974], p. 9). May I emphasize the word *live*. Live richly, fully, joyfully. Be excited about your chance to grow and develop your potential. Be excited about life and the opportunities and privileges that the Lord has given you.

Develop good self-image

Make a decision as to the kind of person you want to be regardless of external circumstances. The first challenge in life is to learn, accept, and internalize "Who am I?" If this question is researched carefully in the scriptures and in Church teachings, the importance of each and every soul will be verified. A good self-image is one of the most important and necessary steps in facing life. So often we believe about ourselves only the things that others have implanted. There is no woman in or out of the Church who is not a loved child of God—no one!

In Psalm 8:4-5 we read:

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour."

But Satan is ever present, trying to destroy our glory and remove our crown. One of his most powerful tools is discouragement. Single sisters, don't let your discouragement make Satan rejoice.

Widen circles of activity

Sometimes singles are inclined to become wrapped up in themselves rather than searching for a way to affect the future. Become success oriented. Know that you can succeed. Believe that you can succeed. Step into auxiliary organizations of the Church and into community organizations and make your presence felt.

Thinking and acting women today are taking part in making history in one of the greatest periods of mankind. Their personal contributions not only make the difference today, but their good works have mighty import upon the future. As circles of activity widen, so will the number of friends and acquaintances widen. And then the influence of good women will have an even greater impact on those with whom they associate.

We must constantly remember it is not our situation or problems that make us unhappy; it is our failure to properly resolve them.

Someone has said that happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it will elude you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it comes and sits softly on your shoulder. (See Nathaniel Hawthorne, quoted in *Reader's Digest*, Apr. 1982, p. 148.)

Consider impact of changes

In the Church our leaders have a great desire and spend much thought and prayer in trying to offer guidelines that may help with solutions. In reference to a recent letter in which the First Presidency gave guidelines for membership in singles wards, let me

emphasize it is contemplated that no abrupt changes in existing programs be made without considering their impact on the lives of those who are presently involved in singles wards. Stake presidents are now authorized to make exceptions to the general policy after consultation and joint agreement with the bishop involved.

No one should be asked to leave. While there are definite advantages, with other things being equal, to an older single person being active in his or her own conventional ward, no one should be displaced or left to feel unwanted when proper marriage opportunities fail to develop. Certain age restrictions are prescribed by policy guidelines for good reasons, but no one should feel displaced or terminated, if you please, through abrupt changes.

Opportunities for growth, development, happiness

Programs are planned and implemented with love and concern for each person in the Church. The desire is to offer opportunities for growth, development, and happiness for all members. With each passing year, the value of our sisters who are living without companions becomes more apparent. Strong leaders, good teachers, and dedicated mothers constantly emerge from this group of sisters. They live and serve with courage and ingenuity. Through perseverance they are finding success.

To be in control of your life, to be a success regardless of your situation, whether happily married, unhappily married, a single parent, a widow, or a wife of an inactive husband, I recommend that you come to know your Father in Heaven. Come to love Him, and always remember that He loves you and will give you guidance and support if you will but give Him the chance. Include Him in your decision making. Include Him when you take inventory of your personal worth. "For behold,

this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men [and women] to perform their labors" (Alma 34:32).

Set your goals—without goals you cannot measure your progress. But don't become frustrated because there are no obvious victories. Remind yourself that striving can be more important than arriving. If you are striving for excellence—if you are trying your best day by day with the wisest use of your time and energy to reach realistic goals—you are a success.

God bless valiant women

Commune daily with your Heavenly Father who knows you best of all. He knows your talents, your strengths, and your weaknesses. You are here on the earth at this time to develop and refine these characteristics. I promise you He will help you. He is aware of your needs. He is aware of your unanswered prayers.

God bless our valiant women members. You are choice in His and our eyes. We pray that with His help and our personal efforts happiness will be achieved. Certainly when we choose the good part, regardless of our current circumstances or situations, life will be lived to the fullest.

May God help us to so do, I pray in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Friend, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton has just spoken to us.

The Choir and congregation will join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall hear from Elder David B. Haight, a member of the Council of the Twelve.

The Choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Elder David B. Haight

I pray for the companionship of the Holy Spirit, that my remarks will be in harmony with revealed truth and will be received and understood by that same heavenly influence.

Assault on traditional family

For more than twenty-five years we have witnessed an unending assault on the traditional family. Sacred values of human goodness, discipline, and love and honor for God our Eternal Father have been challenged.

A new self-centered generation has made the family a prime target of continuing belittlement. Marriage is downgraded or shunned, parenthood degraded and avoided. These, with other disturbing influences, have resulted in a torrent of evil temptations for so-called instant gratification and the demeaning of marriage and the sacred roles of wife and mother.

Divine intent for marriage

Unfortunately, there are many good human beings who would live differently, but they do not know of God's eternal plan for His children. We learn from the scriptures that the divine intent is that marriage is to be an eternal union with enduring family relationships throughout eternity.

Scripture reveals that, after the earth was developed, God created man in His own image and gave him dominion over the earth. By the side of man stood the woman, sharing with him the divinely bestowed honor and dignity of supremacy over all other creations. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

"In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

The Lord also instructed, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto

his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24), thereby giving sanction to the union of male and female in authorized marriage, which is heaven-planned for the creation of mortal bodies.

The Lord's program for the family

The earliest recorded commandment to Adam and Eve was to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

We regard children as gifts from God, committed to our care for loving, nurturing, and careful training.

The Lord also instructed, "And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28).

They are not to be mistreated or abused, for, with their parents, they are part of a family with the potential of eternal relationship.

President Spencer W. Kimball explained:

"The Lord organized the whole program in the beginning with a father who procreates, provides, and loves and directs, and a mother who conceives and bears and nurtures and feeds and trains. The Lord could have organized it otherwise but chose to have a unit with responsibility and purposeful associations where children train and discipline each other and come to love, honor, and appreciate each other. The family is the great plan of life as conceived and organized by our Father in Heaven" (*Ensign*, July 1973, p. 15).

Marriage was meant to be and can be a loving, binding, and harmonious relationship between a husband and wife.

Divorce always tragic and painful

As we contemplate our Lord's declaration to Moses, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man"

(Moses 1:39), we reflect with sadness upon the present serious trend of families and homes being torn apart through divorce.

It would seem that a major underlying cause of divorce is in not understanding that marriage and families are God-given and God-ordained. If we understood the full meaning we would have less divorce and its attendant unhappiness. Couples would plan for a happy marriage relationship based on divine instruction. If couples understood from the beginning of their romance that their marriage relationship could be blessed with promises and conditions extending into the eternities, divorce would not even be a considered alternative when difficulties arise. The current philosophy—get a divorce if it doesn't work out—handicaps a marriage from the beginning.

The ever-increasing rise in divorce is ample evidence of how acceptable divorce has become as the popular solution to unhappy or "not-quite-up-to-expectation" marriages.

But no matter how acceptable divorce has become—how quick and easy to obtain—divorce is tragic and painful, not only at the outset, but also in the years to come.

Divorce can never really be final. How can mothers and fathers really divorce themselves from their own flesh and blood children, or from the memories of days and years of shared experiences which have become part of their very lives.

Divorce rarely occurs without immense emotional, social, and financial upheaval. Most people underestimate the alienation, bitterness, disruption, and frustration between a divorcing couple, and among their children, friends, and relatives. Some never adjust to the resulting emotional consequences.

Perhaps most tragic of all is that more than 60 percent of all divorces involve children under eighteen years of age. Children of divorce all too often have a higher delinquency rate and less self-confidence, and tend to be more

promiscuous and themselves more likely to have unhappy marriages.

Prepare for success

Considering the enormous importance of marriage, it is rather astonishing that we don't make better preparation for success. Usually, young couples date for a few months or for a year or two, enjoying romance and getting acquainted, and then get married. Once married, they soon learn that romance must blend with spiritual beliefs, in-law relationships, money issues, and serious discussions involving ethics, children, and the running of a home.

Too many people are inadequately prepared for this lofty responsibility.

"People go to college for years to prepare for a vocation or profession . . . not [nearly] as . . . rewarding [or as important] as marriage." (See Lowell S. Bennion, "Conference on Utah Families," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 Apr. 1980, p. F-9.)

Seek good counsel

Serious transgressions, as well as injured lives that sometimes are revealed in bishop's offices, all too frequently make it clear that husband and wife relationships deserve a great deal more prayerful attention than many are giving it. Fewer marriages would get in trouble, and more would be happier, if couples visited a warm-hearted bishop who might suggest ways of avoiding pitfalls, and encourage husbands and wives to thoughtfully use self-discipline and needed restraint and develop the loving attribute of unselfishness.

A few years ago, President Harold B. Lee received this letter from a married woman: "When we thought that the end was here and that there was only one thing to do and that was to get a divorce, we had been told that we should counsel with our bishop. At first . . . we hesitated, because he was just a young man. . . . But he was our

bishop so we went to see him. We poured out our souls to our young bishop. He sat and listened silently, and when we ran out of conversation he said, simply, 'Well, my wife and I, we had problems, too, and we learned how to solve them.' That is all . . . he said. But you know there was something that happened as a result of that young bishop's statement. We walked out of there and we said, 'Well, if they can solve their problems, what is the matter with us?'" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1974, p. 100).

Protect and nurture marriage

A prominent producer recently stated:

"In movies and on television there is . . . reluctance to deal with marriage, . . . [except as] a comic turn or in soap operas. We prefer to stress . . . [sexual involvement] and leave [alone] . . . the happily-ever-after, . . . as in children's fairy stories" (Karl E. Meyer, *The Wife of Your Youth* [Palos Heights, Illinois: Np, 1977], np).

Our concern is not just that media producers and writers don't portray happy, fruitful marriage, but that many married couples don't take their marriages seriously enough—to work at them, protect them, nurture them, cultivate them day in and day out, week in and week out, yearlong, quarter-century long, half-a-century long, forever.

Middle-age divorce is particularly distressing, as it indicates that mature people, who are the backbone of our society, are not working carefully enough to preserve their marriages. Divorces granted to people over forty-five have increased at an alarming rate. When middle-aged people even consider breaking up their marriage—a couple who may have reared their children, who possibly have grandchildren—and now decide to go their separate ways, they need to realize that every divorce is the result of selfishness on the part of one or both.

In Malachi we read:

"The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. . . .

"Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Malachi 2:14–15).

The ideal marriage

Marriage is a covenant. Two of the Ten Commandments deal directly with preserving the sanctity of marriage: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife" (Exodus 20:14, 17).

Jesus magnified the law against adultery: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

The ideal marriage is the faithfulness of a man and a woman to each other, a faithfulness that began when each had chosen the other. In Proverbs we read, "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Proverbs 5:18). Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, and be infatuated always with her love. (See Proverbs 5:19.)

It is a privilege indeed to live our life with the wife of our youth, to enjoy the golden years together—neither objecting to the wrinkles nor the gray hair—but to continue acquiring a depth of love, oneness, and wisdom which can be shared with each other now and throughout all eternity.

Marriage is sustained by faith and knowledge of its divine establishment, and is sustained daily by the energy of love. A wise man explained, "When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as one's own satisfaction and security then the state of love exists" (Harry Stack Sullivan, *Concepts of Modern Psychiatry*, 2d ed. [New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1961], p. 42).

Ask God for help

A strong, shared conviction that there is something eternally precious about a marriage relationship builds faith to resist evil. Marriage should be beautiful and fulfilling, with joy beyond our fondest dreams, for "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11).

Latter-day Saints need not divorce—there are solutions to marriage problems. If, as husband and wife, you are having serious misunderstandings or if you feel some strain or tension building up in your marriage, you should humbly get on your knees together and ask God our Father, with a sincere heart and real intent, to lift the darkness that is over your relationship,

that you may receive the needed light, see your errors, repent of your wrongs, forgive each other, and receive each unto yourselves as you did in the beginning. I solemnly assure you that God lives and will answer your humble pleas, for he has said, "Ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done" (D&C 50:29). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder G. Homer Durham of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy will be our next speaker.

Elder G. Homer Durham

Meaning of *Jesus*

Recently, while I was driving on the highway, a car passed. This was not unusual. The bumper sticker was a little different, saying, "Save the Humans." One sees many bumper stickers these days. This one turned my thoughts to something fundamental, the word *save*. I thought of the plan of salvation. I thought of the world of scholarship, and of Professor Arnold Toynbee's analysis of the many so-called "saviours" found in history (*A Study of History*, abridgement, vols. 7–10, D. C. Somervell, chap. 20 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957], np). We know that one Savior truly saves—the Lord Jesus Christ. This is His church. We have taken upon ourselves His name.

What does the average person mean when he testifies that Jesus is the Christ? Of course, it is the witness of the Spirit that counts. But what do the words *Jesus* and *Christ* mean?

A brief excursion into the meaning of these two words may be useful, especially to young people, in these times.

The *Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933) tells us that the word *Jesus* came into the English language from Middle English, adapted from the Latin *Iesus*, which in turn was adapted from the Greek *Iesous*. This in turn was adapted from the Hebrew or Aramaic word *Yeshua* or *Yehoshua*. The earlier root was *Joshua*. This dictionary goes on to explain that the word *Joshua* derived from the *Jah* of *Jahveh*, meaning that "Jehovah is salvation." Thus, the word *Jesus* has parallel meaning with *Savior*. Dr. David Flusser of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem puts it simply: "Jesus is the common Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua" (*Encyclopedia Judaica* [Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971], 10:10).

Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary of the English Language (Cleveland: World Publishing Co.,

1968), unabridged, sets forth a comparable definition, noting that the Latin-Greek derivation from the Hebrew *Joshua* means literally, "help of Jehovah." But in addition, this source states that the word derives from the Hebrew word for *Lord God*, he who is available to help, to save. In this sense, then, the word *Jesus* means simply, "God is help." How "Save the Humans," as the bumper sticker read? The dictionaries and the gospel give the answer.

Meaning of Christ

What of the word *Christ*? It also comes to the English-speaking world from Middle English, derived from the Latin *Christus*, in turn from the Greek *Christos*, which meant "the Anointed"—a noun made from the past participle of the Greek verb "to anoint."

Webster also states that the word *Christ* was originally Jesus' title. Thus, proper usage of the two words in English would be as Elder James E. Talmage titled his book, *Jesus the Christ*. Usage and revelation have joined the two as part of a sacred, revered name.

Savior and Messiah

Elder Talmage defined the two words as follows:

"*Jesus* is the individual name of the Savior, and as thus spelled is of Greek derivation. . . . In the original the name was well understood as meaning 'Help of Jehovah,' or, 'Savior.'"

Elder Talmage emphasized that the word *Christ* is a sacred title, not "an ordinary . . . common name; it is of Greek derivation, and . . . is identical with its Hebrew equivalent *Messiah* . . . , signifying the *Anointed One*" (*Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], pp. 35–36).

Father and the Son

What was the earliest documented mention of the sacred name *Jesus Christ* now available to us? Dr. Joseph Armitage Robinson, one-time Norris Professor of Cambridge University, held that it is probably found in the opening verse of First Thessalonians (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 15, sv "Jesus"). Imagine the impact of those words then, as we read them today in English, as received by the Thessalonians possibly two decades after the Crucifixion:

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

Note that the phrase *God the Father* is separated by the conjunction *and* from the phrase *the Lord Jesus Christ*. This demonstrates first-century belief in the separate individuality of the Father and the Son, as restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

"Behold the Lamb of God"

The opening verse of the Gospel according to St. Mark also comes with great force as a historical document fraught with meaning:

"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1).

The gospel of John the Beloved is even more eloquent. He records the witness of the Savior's forerunner, John the Baptist, as follows:

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"Save the Humans"? Think of the Baptist's testimony: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Scriptures confirm dictionary meaning

How did the Savior of mankind acquire his name in mortality? By revelation. To Joseph of Nazareth, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream, saying:

"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21).

Here is confirmation of the dictionary meaning of the name, as recorded by Matthew: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Mary also had angelic confirmation of the name, as recorded by Luke:

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:30-31).

The formal naming of the child when eight days old is recorded by Luke:

"His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21).

The name which means "God is help," "the Anointed One," "the Promised Messiah," has thus come to us.

Mankind's quest for a Savior

Some three decades ago, Professor Arnold Toynbee concluded one of the most extensive studies of history ever undertaken. He recorded mankind's quest for "saviours," for "the way out." He identified four categories: (1) the "Creative Genius"; (2) the "Saviour with a Sword"; (3) the "Saviour with a Time Machine," one dreaming of a utopia or an archaic past which never existed; (4) the saviour as

a "Philosopher, Masked as a King." All these history rejects. Finally, Toynbee pointed to "the God Incarnate in a Man," the Lord Jesus Christ. And then he wrote:

"This is in truth the final result of our survey of saviours. When we set out on this quest we found ourselves moving in the midst of a mighty host, but, as we have pressed forward, the marchers, company by company, have fallen out of the race. The first to fail were the swordsmen, the next the archaists and the futurists, the next the philosophers, until only gods were left in the running. . . . And now, as we stand and gaze with our eyes fixed upon the farther shore, a single figure rises from the flood and straightway fills the whole horizon. There is the Saviour" (*A Study of History*, abridgment, vols. 1-6, D. C. Somervell [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957], p. 547).

We know that Savior to be the Lord Jesus Christ. From many, many experiences over my lifetime, I can truly testify to you that He truly is our Savior; and if the Father is approached in prayer, as His Son has commanded us, doors will open to help us move forward without fear in life. That all men everywhere may come to realize and know the significance of *Jesus the Christ*, the One chosen before the foundation of the world, is my faith and witness. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Tabernacle Choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Elder G. Homer Durham of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just spoken to us, following which the Choir sang "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth."

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

When Jesus walked the dusty pathways of towns and villages that we now reverently call the Holy Land and taught His disciples by beautiful Galilee, He often spoke in parables, in language the people understood best. Frequently, He referred to home building in relationship to the lives of those who listened.

"Establish a house"

He declared: "Every . . . house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25). Later He cautioned: "Behold, mine house is a house of order, . . . and not a house of confusion" (D&C 132:8).

In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, December 27, 1832, the Master counseled: "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119).

Where could any of us locate a more suitable blueprint whereby we could wisely and properly build a house to personally occupy throughout eternity?

Building code in Matthew

Such a house would meet the building code outlined in Matthew—even a house built "upon a rock" (Matthew 7:24), a house capable of withstanding the rains of adversity, the floods of opposition, and the winds of doubt everywhere present in our challenging world.

Some might question: "But that revelation was to provide guidance for the construction of a temple. Is it relevant today?"

I would respond: "Did not the Apostle Paul declare, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that

the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' (1 Corinthians 3:16)."

Perhaps if we consider these architectural guidelines on an individual basis, we can more readily appreciate this divine counsel from the Master Builder, the Creator of the world, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

A house of prayer

Our inspired blueprint first cautions that our house should be a *house of prayer*. The Master taught:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray . . . , that they may be seen of men. . . .

"But thou, when thou prayest, . . . pray to thy Father which is in secret. . . .

"Use not vain repetitions. . . .

"After this manner . . . pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" (Matthew 6:5-7, 9-13).

This element of our blueprint can be taught to children when they are yet young. When our oldest son was about three, he would kneel with his mother and me in our evening prayer. I was serving as the bishop of the ward at the time, and a lovely lady in the ward, Margaret Lister, lay perilously ill with cancer. Each night we would pray for Sister Lister. One evening our tiny son offered the prayer and confused the words of the prayer with a story from a nursery book. He began: "Heavenly Father, please bless Sister Lister, Henny Penny, Chicken Licken, Turkey Lurkey, and all the little folks." We held back the smiles that evening. Later

we were humbled as Margaret Lister sustained a complete recovery. We do not demean the prayer of a child. After all, our children have more recently been with our Heavenly Father than have we.

Let our house be a *house of prayer*.

A house of fasting

Our house should also be a *house of fasting*. This portion of the blueprint is personified in the account found in Isaiah titled the "True Fast": "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? . . .

"To deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

The reward is then announced: "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . .

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, . . . and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:6-11).

Let our house be a *house of fasting*.

A house of faith

Our house is to be a *house of faith*. James recorded:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like

a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James 1:5-6).

A practical application of such abiding faith is found in the spirit of Nephi and his stirring declaration: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). He did not waver; he believed. Is there a counterpart application even today?

Some years ago I accompanied President Hugh B. Brown on a tour of the Samoan Mission. The members and missionaries in American Samoa had advised us that a severe drought had imperiled their water supply to the point that our chapels and our school would of necessity be closed if rain did not soon fall. They asked us to unite our faith with theirs.

Signs of the drought were everywhere as we left the airport at Pago Pago and journeyed to the school at Mapasaga. The sun was shining brightly; not a cloud appeared in the azure blue sky. The members rejoiced as the meeting began. He who offered the opening prayer thanked our Heavenly Father for our safe arrival, knowing that we would somehow bring the desired rainfall. As President Brown rose to speak, the sun was soon shaded by gathering clouds. Then we heard the clap of thunder and saw the flash of lightning. The heavens opened. The rains fell. The drought ended.

Later at the airport, as we prepared for the short flight to Western Samoa, the pilot of the small plane said to the ground crew, "This is the most unusual weather pattern I have ever seen. Not a cloud is in the sky except over the Mormon school at Mapasaga. I don't understand it!"

President Brown said to me, "Here's your opportunity. Go help him understand." I did so.

Our house surely is a *house of faith*.

A house of learning

Let our house be a *house of learning*. Said the Lord: "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek

learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). He counseled: "Come . . . learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). No other quest for learning promises such a profound reward.

Let our house be a *house of learning*.

A house of glory

Our house is to be a *house of glory*. For our house to be such, we need to be square with God, fair with others, and honest with ourselves. One cannot be one person and pretend to be another. Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, had Huckleberry Finn teach us this vital lesson. Huckleberry Finn is talking:

"It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It warn't no use to try and hide it from Him. . . . I knowed very well why they wouldn't come. . . . It was because I was playing double. I was letting on to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth say I would do the right thing and the clean thing, . . . but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. *You can't pray a lie—I found that out*" (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* [New York: Washington Square Press, Pocket Books, 1973], pp. 271-72; italics added).

Someone once philosophized, "Consistency, thou art a jewel" (*The Home Book of Quotations*, sel. Burton Stevenson [New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1934], p. 304). By being consistently good, we can ensure a *house of glory*.

A house of order

Our house is to be a *house of order*. "To every thing there is a season,

and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1), advised Ecclesiastes, the Preacher. Such is true in our lives. Let us provide time for family, time for work, time for study, time for service, time for recreation, time for self—but above all, time for Christ.

Then our house will be a *house of order*.

A house of God

Finally, let our house be a *house of God*. Clean thoughts, noble purpose, a willing heart, and ready hands are all features of a house of God. He does not leave us to struggle alone but stands ever ready to help.

A few years ago, I was afforded the privilege to serve as a mission president and became intimately acquainted with more than four hundred missionaries. We had one young missionary who was very ill. After weeks of hospitalization, as the doctor prepared to undertake extremely serious and complicated surgery, he asked that we send for the missionary's mother and father. He advised there was a possibility the patient would not survive the surgery.

The parents came. Late one evening, the father and I entered a hospital room in Toronto, Canada, placed our hands upon the head of the young missionary, and gave him a blessing. What happened following that blessing was a testimony to me.

The missionary was in a six-bed ward in the hospital. The other beds were occupied by five men with a variety of illnesses. The morning of his surgery, the missionary's bed was empty. The nurse came into the room with the breakfast these men normally ate. She took a tray over to the patient in bed number one and said, "Fried eggs this morning, and I have an extra portion for you!"

The occupant of bed number one had suffered an accident with his lawn mower. Other than an injured toe, he

was well physically. He said to the nurse, "I'll not be eating this morning."

"All right, we shall give your breakfast to your partner in bed number two."

As she approached that patient, he said, "I think I'll not eat this morning."

Each of the five men declined breakfast. The young lady exclaimed, "Other mornings you eat us out of house and home, and today not one of you wants to eat! What is the reason?"

Then the man who occupied bed number six answered: "You see, bed number three is empty. Our friend is in the operating room under the surgeon's hands. He needs all the help he can get. He is a missionary for his church, and while we have been patients in this ward, he has talked to us about the principles of his church—principles of prayer, of faith, of fasting wherein we call upon the Lord for blessings." He continued, "We don't know much about the Mormon church, but we have learned a great deal about our friend; and we are fasting for him today."

The operation was a success. When I attempted to pay the doctor, he countered, "Why, it would be dishonest for me to accept a fee. I have never before performed surgery when my hands seemed to be guided by a Power which was other than my own. No," he said, "I wouldn't take a fee for the surgery which Someone on high literally helped me to perform."

Such is a *house of God*.

Builders of eternal houses

This, then, is our building project. We are master builders of eternal houses, even "temples of God." (See 1 Corinthians 3:16.)

"Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119).

Then the Lord, even our building inspector, may say to us, as He said when He appeared to Solomon, a builder of another day: "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (1 Kings 9:3).

May we follow this divinely provided blueprint. May we be successful builders of our eternal homes, in my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve has been our concluding speaker.

We express appreciation to the managers and owners of the many television and radio stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings." The benediction will then be given by Elder Charles Didier of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings."

Elder Charles Didier offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second general session of the 154th Annual General Conference began at 2:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 7, 1984. President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a combined Salt Lake Institute Choir and single adult choir from the Ensign, Rose Park, Liberty, Pioneer, Monument Park, Granite, Holladay, Olympus, Bonneville, and Millcreek Utah regions directed by Ronald Horton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Benson made the following remarks:

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren and sisters, the First Presidency has asked that I conduct this session of the conference.

We are most pleased to have President Spencer W. Kimball with us. We are sorry that President [Marion G.] Romney cannot be with us.

We are pleased to welcome those who are gathered here in the Tabernacle for this, the second general session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those who are participating by means of television or radio; also the many who are watching in over six hundred stake centers throughout the United States and Canada to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission.

We note that Elders Marion D. Hanks and Jack H. Goasland, Jr., are presiding at the overflow session in the Assembly Hall.

We are pleased to acknowledge especially our guests who are present

this afternoon, along with general and local Church leaders and members from many parts of the world.

We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and to the owners and operators of cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

The music for this session will be provided by a combined Salt Lake Institute Choir and single adult choir from the Ensign, Rose Park, Liberty, Pioneer, Monument Park, Granite, Holladay, Olympus, Bonneville, and Millcreek Utah regions, under the direction of Ronald Horton with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

The choir will begin this service by singing "O Sons of Zion." The invocation will be offered by Elder Loren C. Dunn, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The combined choir sang "O Sons of Zion."

Elder Loren C. Dunn offered the invocation.

President Benson

The choir will now sing "Beautiful Savior."

The choir sang "Beautiful Savior."

President Benson

Brother Wilford G. Edling will now read the auditor's report. Afterward, Brother Francis M. Gibbons will present the statistical report of the Church for the year 1983.

Auditor's Report 1983

Wilford G. Edling

We have reviewed the annual financial report of the Church as of 31 December 1983 and operations for the year then ended. The financial statements and operations reviewed by the committee include the general funds of the Church and of other controlled organizations, the accounts of which are maintained by the Finance and Records Department of the Church. We have also examined the budgeting, accounting, and auditing procedures employed and the manner in which funds are received and expenditures are controlled. We determined that expenditures of general Church funds were authorized by the First Presidency and by budgetary procedures. The budget is authorized by the Council on Disposition of Tithes, comprised of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric. The Budget and Appropriations Committee, in weekly meetings, administers the expenditure of funds under the budget.

Modern accounting technology and equipment are employed by the Finance and Records Department and other departments in keeping abreast of rapid Church expansion and changing methods of electronic data processing.

The Auditing Department, which is independent of all other departments, functions in the threefold capacity of performing financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems employed by the Church. These services are conducted on a continual basis and include all Church departments, other Church-controlled organizations (the accounts of which

are maintained in the Finance and Records Department), and worldwide operations including missions, administrative offices, and departmental activities conducted in foreign countries. The extent and scope of the Auditing Department in safeguarding the resources of the Church are expanding to encompass the growth and widening activities of the Church. The audit of local funds of wards and stakes is assigned to stake auditors, the reports of which are now reviewed by the Church Auditing Department. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by professional auditing firms or by government regulatory agencies.

Based on our review of the annual financial report and other accounting data, and our study of the accounting and auditing methods by which financial operations are controlled, together with continuing discussions with personnel of the Finance and Records Department, the Auditing Department, and Church legal representatives, we are of the opinion that the general funds of the Church received and expended during the year 1983 have been properly accounted for in accordance with the established procedures outlined herein.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
Wilford G. Edling
David M. Kennedy
Warren E. Pugh
Merrill J. Bateman
Ted E. Davis

Statistical Report 1983

Francis M. Gibbons

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of 31 December 1983. (Membership figures include estimates based on 1983 reports available prior to conference.)

Church Units

Number of stakes	1,458
Number of districts	343
Number of missions	178
Number of wards	9,329
Number of branches	
in stakes	2,641
Number of branches	
in missions	2,024
(These statistics reflect an increase of 66 stakes and 378 wards and branches during 1983.)	
Number of sovereign countries with organized wards or branches	90
Number of territories, colonies, and possessions with organized wards or branches	17

Church Membership

Total membership at the close of 1983	5,400,000
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Church Growth during 1983

Increase in children	
of record	112,000
Children of record	
baptized	69,000
Converts baptized	189,419

Social Statistics

Birthrate per thousand	24.5
Number of persons married	
per thousand	11.1
Death rate per thousand	4.0

Priesthood

Deacons	229,000
Teachers	169,000

Priests	335,000
Elders	444,000
Seventies	32,000
High Priests	190,000

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	26,565
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Genealogical

Names cleared in 1983 for temple endowments	4,288,303
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Temples

Number of endowments performed during 1983:	
For the living	52,116
For the dead	4,364,928
Temples in operation	25
Temples planned or under construction or renovation	17
Six temples were dedicated in 1983, and six are planned to be dedicated in 1984. (If problems arise, one or more might be delayed until 1985.)	

Church Educational System

Total enrollment during 1982-83 school year:	
Seminaries and Institutes, including special programs	389,258
Church schools, colleges, and continuing education	68,707

Welfare Services

Persons assisted by LDS Social Services	118,672
Persons placed in gainful employment	25,460
Man-days of labor donated to Welfare Services	399,375
Bishops' orders from storehouse	305,891

Prominent Members Who Have Passed Away Since Last April

Elder Mark E. Petersen, member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Clara May Jeffs Hunter, wife of Elder

Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles; Lucille Thurman Buehner, widow of Carl W. Buehner, Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric; Margaret Ann Newman Wells, widow of John Wells, Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric; Blanche Black Stoddard, former general Relief Society secretary; and Paul Benjamin Tanner, former general Sunday School treasurer.

President Benson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

My public and warm welcome to Elder Nelson and Elder Oaks, choice friends of many years, as they now enter into an even deeper friendship.

Great plan of the Eternal God

One of the great blessings flowing from amplifying, latter-day revelations is the crucial, doctrinal framework known as the marvelous plan of salvation, the plan of happiness, or the plan of mercy. (See Alma 42:5, 8, 15.) However designated, it represents what Amulek called the "great plan of the Eternal God" without which mankind would unavoidably perish (Alma 34:9).

The plan is a most stunning example of the precious perspective of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, full faith in the Lord Jesus Christ includes and requires full faith in His Father's plan of salvation.

President Brigham Young declared: "The Spirit of revelation must be in each and every individual, to know the plan of salvation and keep in the path that leads them to the presence of God" (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:279).

Jesus Christ at the center of the Father's plan

So vital is this framework that if one stays or strays outside it, he risks provinciality and misery. In fact, most human misery represents ignorance of or noncompliance with the plan. A cessation of such mortal suffering will not come without compliance to it. Hence, the Lord, who has freely shared this vital knowledge with us, has urged us to teach the fundamentals of this plan "freely" (Moses 6:58).

At the center of the Father's plan is Jesus Christ, mankind's Redeemer. Yet, as foreseen, many judge Jesus "to be a thing of naught" (1 Nephi 19:9), or "consider him" merely "a man" (Mosiah 3:9). Whether others deny or delimit Jesus, for us He is our Lord and Savior! Comparatively, brothers and sisters, it matters very little what people think of us, but it matters very much what we think of Him. It matters very little, too, who others say we are; what matters is who we say Jesus is. (See Matthew 16:13-17.)

For instance, we appreciate not only the towering divinity of Jesus Christ, but His breathtaking mobility and the scope of His shepherding. The resurrected Jesus revisited the Middle East scene of His mortal messiahship. Then some souls in the Americas. (See 3 Nephi 11.) And then His other lost sheep. (See 3 Nephi 17:4.)

God's paternal purpose

In His selfless plan, the Lord doeth nothing save it be for the benefit of the children of men. (See 2 Nephi 26:24.) He labors, lovingly and constantly, as Moses and Jeremiah declared, "for our good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24; see also Jeremiah 32:38-40). In His grand design, His "work" and "glory" are "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Thus, even when we truly learn to love God, we must humbly acknowledge that He loved us first. (See 1 John 4:19.)

Meanwhile, Shakespeare was not very wide of the mark in writing, "All the world's a stage" (*As You Like It*, act 2, scene 7). But not for playacting!

The very word *plan* confirms God's paternal purpose, a realization so desperately needed by the confused and despairing on the world's stage.

The "plan of happiness" not only ensures the immortalization of our individual identities, but can yield bettered and reborn individuals. Fittingly, one appreciative prophet declared, "O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13). Enoch wept when he saw the sweep of history and the unnecessary human misery. (See Moses 7:41.) But he also saw the triumph of God's plan. Another prophet exclaimed: "God . . . made these things known unto us that we might not perish . . . because he loveth our souls . . . ; therefore, in his mercy he doth visit us by his angels, that the plan of salvation might be made known unto us" (Alma 24:14).

It took visits by angels in our day, too, in order to instruct us anew regarding God's plan of salvation and to reassure us that mortality is not a conclusive and massive mausoleum, and that death is not extinction.

Longing for a heavenly home

Alma faced an awful and anguished moment when he felt that he might actually "become extinct both

soul and body" (Alma 36:15). Then he remembered his father's prophecies "concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world" (Alma 36:17). In a moment of deep intellectual humility, his "mind caught hold upon this thought." Out came Alma's great soul cry: "O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me"! (Alma 36:18).

Purpose replaced pain. Joy swallowed up despair as Alma apparently viewed God upon His throne, and he longed to join God! (See Alma 36:22.)

Such longing for a heavenly home is real, especially in view of how this life is designed. After all, brothers and sisters, when we rejoice in beautiful scenery, great art, and great music, it is but the flexing of instincts acquired in another place and another time.

Plan of mercy

Life turns out, however, to be just what one would expect of a deliberately constructed proving and tutoring experience which features opportunities, choices, and deprivations. Furthermore, there is no way *around*—the only way to go is *through*!

And what a "through" it is!

Even so, for us mistake-prone mortals, this plan of mercy provides for recognition and redress of error and for the resumption of interrupted individual development.

Redemptive and refining provisions are made: For a brave Peter faltering and sinking on the churning waves—and yet knowing to whom to look to live, and crying out, "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). For a meek Moses struggling with people, fatigued and with all the burdens of leadership. (See Numbers 11:11, 14, 29.) For a Jonah seeking to substitute Tarshish, but still reaching Nineveh and, thereby, receiving a great lesson in compassion. For erring Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Thomas B. Marsh to recover their spiritual poise and vote with their feet by traveling westward to rejoin, in reconciliation, and to sustain

the plan and its enunciating latter-day prophets.

Hence, brothers and sisters, for the faithful, our finest hours are sometimes during or just following our darkest hours.

God sees end from beginning

It is an incredible irony, therefore, that some complainingly attempt to use the very tutoring process of the Lord against Him. Or resent the reality that we are to walk by faith during this mortal experience. Yet, as practical and spiritual President Brigham Young said, "There is no saving faith merely upon . . . acknowledging a fact" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 154).

Furthermore, since this life is such a brief experience, there must be regular exit routes. Some easy. Some hard. Some sudden. Others lingering. Therefore, we cannot presume, even by faith, to block all these exits, all the time, and for all people. Nor, if possessed of full, eternal perspective, would we desire so to do.

Since certain recollections are withheld, we do not now see the end from the beginning. But God does. Meanwhile, we are in what might be called "the murky middle." Therein, however, we can still truly know that God loves us, individually and perfectly, even though we cannot always explain the meaning of all things happening to us or around us. (See 1 Nephi 11:17.)

Christ's doctrines mark the way

Enclosed in this mortal cocoon, or classroom, we would be totally provincial in outlook except for faith in, and knowledge of, the "great plan of the Eternal God."

Hence, Christ's doctrines pertaining to the plan of salvation stand like sentinel scriptures to mark and light the way. His gospel guardrails line the strait and narrow path to steady us,

nudge us, and even jar us for the sake of our spiritual safety!

So much more than a matter of abstract theology, this great plan can focus daily life. Its truths are crucial to how we see ourselves, others, life, the Lord, and even the universe. Or how we view a baby. Or death. Or the praise and honors of the world. This plan constitutes the mother lode of meaning and can cradle us, conceptually, amid any concern.

Its truths and perspectives permit us to distinguish between a great book and mere want ads, between vengeance and justice, rage and righteous indignation, and pleasure and happiness.

Unconditional surrender to God's plan

With an understanding of God's plan of salvation, we know that the rejoicing, the striving, the suffering, the tutoring, and the enduring experiences of life all play their part in an intelligible process of helping us, if we will, to become, as the Savior beckoningly invited, "even as I am" (3 Nephi 27:27).

This individual development sometimes requires the march of a Zion's camp, or an arduous Hole in the Rock trek, or special classrooms like the settlements in northern Mexico, wherein special individuals were fashioned. Those episodes, however, had nothing to do with real estate but everything to do with our second estate!

Hence, in submitting knowingly and meekly to this plan, we cannot say to the Lord that we are willing to surrender but only on our terms. There are no conditions in unconditional surrender!

Freedom to choose

Even with all of its interior consistency, however, the plan cannot bring true happiness to anyone whose life is grossly inconsistent with its standards. It cannot fully enfold him who is too worried about being taken in. It has no

place of honor for one too concerned with losing his place in the secular synagogue. (See John 12:42-43.)

Though the plan reflects a caring Father and a Savior, believers in the plan are not automatically immune to the consuming cares of the world.

The plan places a striking emphasis on present human freedom to choose. (See 2 Nephi 2:27.) Yet some of our present circumstances may reflect previous agreements, now forgotten, but once freely made.

The plan always points the way, but does not always smooth the way, since individual development requires an "opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11).

Intellectual and spiritual confirmation about plan

The Lord will give us the needed intellectual and spiritual confirmation concerning His plan, but on His terms and in His own way.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

Truly, of all the errors mortals could make, God's plan of salvation is the wrong thing to be wrong about!

No error could be more enormous or more everlasting in its consequences!

No wonder this Church and its people go to such great lengths and expense to share the fulness of the gospel concerning this plan.

No wonder the Lord wants the plan taught plainly and repetitively.

And why not? It is God's plan—not ours! And, given the unimpressive outcomes of man's plans to solve the world's problems, aren't we glad! Furthermore, of all the things about which we might converse, as Jacob wrote, "Why not speak of the atonement of Christ?" (Jacob 4:12). Why not, brothers and sisters? This event arches over all of human history, as a Redeeming God and Savior Son pressed onward with the great plan of happiness.

Yes, in the plan, God would have us be happy, but first we had to be free to choose.

God's gift to us of this moral agency tells us wonderful things about His beneficial and developmental purposes. Our abuse of that agency tells us awful things about ourselves!

Yet, on this mortal stage, we see great moments of mercy, stirring celebrations of compassion, striking selflessness, and quiet and constant heroism among people of all creeds and colors and cultures.

This should not surprise us. After all, whose spirit children are we? (See Hebrews 12:9.)

The school, the curriculum, the Schoolmaster

Unsurprisingly, therefore, this mortal school produces some soaring triumphs but also a history filled with individual mistakes. But we should not blame the school, nor the curriculum! Least of all, the Schoolmaster! Furthermore, we dare not lecture Him on the plight of His students!

Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, no one ever promised us that discipleship in the last days would be a picnic in the park.

Former periods of stress can guide us. When the earlier coming of Jesus was imminent, signs abounded. Still, for some, there were "doubtings" (3 Nephi 8:4). But the faithful prevailed and were vindicated.

There were determined detractors then, mocking the faith of believers, briefly creating "a great uproar," even rejoicing over the seeming prospect that the faith of Christ's followers would be in vain. (See 3 Nephi 1:5-7.) It was not. Members kept the faith, and the faith kept them!

Reassurances today

For today's spiritually attuned, the reassurances will be there, as with Elisha's young servant. Encircled by an outnumbering enemy, the young man

rightly sought reassurance from the prophet and seer, who told him, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16). But the young man could count, and, clearly, it did not look that way to him—until after the prophet's prayer in his behalf. Then, the young man's eyes were opened, and he saw the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire. (See 2 Kings 6:17.)

All will be well now, as anciently, because the Lord's covenant keepers have His echoing assurance:

"And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:

"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good" (Jeremiah 32:38–40).

I so testify and assure in apostolic authority and in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Sister Elaine Cannon, who was released this morning as general president of the Young Women.

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle

Covenants, ordinances, and service

I have served in past years as both a mission president and as a temple president. I have watched the young people as they have come to the missions in South America and come to the temple for their endowments and sealings.

I have seen those who were well prepared, and those who were not so well prepared for these blessings. But, most of all, I watched anxiously for those who were not prepared—those who did not come at all—and wondered why.

A few of them were from families where every effort had been made to prepare them for missionary service and for the blessings of the temple. Most of them, however, were from homes where they did not receive what was required to qualify them and to give them a desire to serve.

In order to prepare youth for missionary service and for the temple blessings, parents must have more in mind than schooling. They must have

more in mind than preparing for a career. They must have more in mind, really, than just to be a missionary—as though attendance was all that was required.

There are three words which must be kept in mind: *covenants*, *ordinances*, and *service*.

The training for covenants, for ordinances, and for service *belongs in the home*. If these are paramount in the minds of the parents, the youth will be prepared. And they will not, because of this, miss any essential training for their careers.

A new challenge for parents

Fathers and mothers are under divine instruction to take care of their parental responsibilities. The things we have done in past years are not now sufficient to protect our children in these critical times. It has long been taught in this Church that the day will come when no one will be able to stand without an individual testimony of the divinity of this work. That day is here.

We are seeing some who lack testimonies turn away from the truth and become prey to error. While we mourn their loss, sorrow will come to those who, by failure to put true principles solidly into place, or by creating doubts in the faith of the weak, or openly teaching falsehoods, caused them to stray. Too many of our youth fail to receive their covenants and ordinances and give service. The onslaught of wickedness against our homes is at once more subtle and more brazen than it has ever been. It is taking its toll among our families. It will be difficult to escape these influences.

However, if we act more wisely, we will be safe. "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). The solution is simple. The results are certain. *No longer can we expect the Church to assume the major role in teaching our children—parents have this prime responsibility.* Parents will be held fully accountable by the Lord to teach their children the principles and ordinances of the gospel and inspire them to serve. The Church, of course, will support parents through home teachers, visiting teachers, classes, counseling, and other assistance. No single parent in this Church needs to feel abandoned in carrying out the duties imposed by the Lord.

Recent studies by the Church have identified some things that parents can do to achieve our goals. Elder Dean Larsen reported the results:

"The factor that has by far the greatest effect on the private, religious life of our youth and upon their achievement of the desired outcomes is *home religious observance*. If a young person lives in a home situation where there is *regular family prayer, regular family study of the gospel and the scriptures, and agreement on basic values*, the likelihood of going on a mission and being married in the temple is greatly enhanced. This home and family influence is much more significant than that exercised by peer groups or by programmed participation. In fact, the influence of the home, whether it be

positive or negative, is overwhelming" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 1 April 1983).

Did you notice that the three key elements are regular family prayer, regular family study of the gospel from the scriptures, and agreement on basic values between parents and children? These are the things, more than anything else, that will lead to a proper understanding of covenants, ordinances, and service.

Family prayer

Parents, we must start each day by kneeling in family prayer. Children need to pray and gain knowledge for *themselves* from the Holy Ghost. Nephi said, "For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray" (2 Nephi 32:8).

Scripture study

Our opportunity to study the scriptures as a family has been strengthened by the consolidated meeting schedule. A good part of the Sabbath can very appropriately be used for both personal and family scripture study.

Few things sponsor spiritual growth more than studying from the scriptures. The Savior said, "He that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see . . ." (3 Nephi 10:14). The Lord has promised that if you will search, you shall see marvelous spiritual truths that will persuade you to turn to Christ as your great exemplar. You will be strengthened in your desire to make covenants with the Lord, to receive the ordinances, and to serve. Alma taught a great principle when he said to Helaman, "My son, . . . see that ye look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

Parents, when you desire to really teach, what do you do? Should we not do as the Savior did? He used questions. He quoted the scriptures, used parables, told stories, and he testified.

He drew on everyday experiences to teach spiritual truths, using all kinds of occasions for teaching. He created an environment for learning—drawing out instead of pouring on.

I know a man who teaches his children at mealtimes. He has a habit of asking two or three gospel questions. He says he can always get the attention of his teenagers when he says, "I have a dollar question for you."

Covenants defined

As we seek to teach by the Spirit, we set a high priority on the importance of covenants, ordinances, and service.

A covenant is a mutual exchange of enforceable promises. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise" (D&C 82:10).

Gospel covenants are made between God and man. The terms are stipulated by the Lord. Gospel covenants have been given to us by revelation. He has given us those covenants and ordinances that are essential to bring us back into his presence.

Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins is an essential covenant to make with the Lord. Faith and repentance precede this ordinance. Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Ghost follow baptism. Acceptance of these first principles and ordinances may obtain for us a remission of our sins and assure our salvation. In the ordinance of the sacrament, we regularly renew this and other covenants, and by complying with our part of the covenant, we receive the Spirit of the Lord to be with us.

The holy priesthood is likewise received by covenant. In essence, priesthood is power—to serve. Additional covenants are made with the Lord when we receive our endowment and when we are sealed in the temple. These are the covenants of exaltation. Teach your children that only by receiving these

ordinances and making these covenants can they be exalted and become like our Heavenly Father. As we endure in faith to the end and serve and love our fellowmen, we can develop the virtues and qualities necessary to qualify us to live with the Lord.

Summation

Service, then, becomes one of the highest virtues. The Savior is our example of unselfish service. Service is a divinely appointed duty. King Benjamin taught that service to others is the same as service to our God. (See Mosiah 2:17.)

Parents, if you will keep in mind that you are preparing your sons and daughters to make covenants, receive ordinances, and render service, you will do things differently. You will have different priorities. You will teach with clearer vision and more productive effort. Missions and temples will see youth coming, not only in greater numbers, but also better qualified for these blessings. And they will embark early on a lifetime of service.

And when your children do these things, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall arise and call you blessed—because you led them to eternal life.

When we as parents have a genuine *desire* to teach the gospel to our children, the Lord will give us entrance into their hearts. Then may we know that as we enter there we stand on holy ground. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has addressed us.

Sister Elaine Cannon, released this morning as general president of the Young Women, will be our next speaker.

Sister Elaine Cannon

President Kimball, it is a great blessing to all of us to have you here, President Hinckley, President Benson, and Brethren. I want to pay a special tribute to Elder Tuttle, who just spoke, because he has been the adviser to the Young Women for this past period of time, and we love him very dearly.

It is a great thrill for me to stand at this pulpit in this Tabernacle where I have come to conference all the years of my life. I have a birthday at this season of the year, and I can remember very clearly spending my ninth birthday here in the Tabernacle listening to the great speeches, and I am thrilled to have this part today.

We are gathered here in the name of the Lord. We are engaged in the work that is true, and I am, like you, grateful for the privilege of membership in this church. Yesterday I had an interesting experience. There has been talk lately in some circles about ordaining women to the priesthood, and someone asked me how I felt about holding the priesthood. I said very stoutly, "I love holding the priesthood when he comes for dinner." I know that isn't very original, but that was my answer. Now with this release from sweet but demanding service, I have every intention of being there when my fine husband comes home and our precious family members gather.

Heart full of deep appreciation

The remarks that I want to make today stem from a heart full of deep appreciation and a heart full of concern. I will talk about appreciation first. Sister Darger and Sister Smith and I, with Sister Palmer, who has been the executive secretary in the Young Women General Presidency, have loved this service with your beautiful young women. We have loved every minute of it, and we feel a great sweetness in the work that we have enjoyed together.

We have served in peace. We have served in faith, and we have sought the help of the Lord and have felt great support. We appreciate that privilege of having been guided in these ways. We have loved serving, and greatly appreciate the remarkable and attractive and faithful members of the general board and staff in the Young Women who have been released this day.

We have appreciated working with the organizations, the other auxiliary leaders, the departments, and the great machinery that operates this institution of the Church. We appreciate all of them, and we will miss those close ties.

But we are comfortable with the new callings that have been made. We love Sister Ardeeth Kapp and are proud that she is able to take the helm of this important work in this day.

Over the years, as I have mentioned, we have had special guidance from great priesthood leaders whom we have come to love very, very much, and we appreciate them. My great tenderness goes toward President Kimball, whose hands were placed upon my head nearly six years ago to set me apart, to give me a special blessing to serve in this capacity. This great, loving, beloved servant of God is indeed a prophet. This fine gentleman, who has said, "Do it," on one occasion, and I say this here in the Tabernacle with great joy, said to me as we talked about the youth of the Church, "Tell them, don't do it—especially if it is something wrong."

Tithes, offerings, and services

The other day in the dedicatory prayer for the new Church Museum, President Hinckley reminded us of all that is made possible by the tithes of faithful Saints. He asked Heavenly Father to look with favor upon the tithe-payers, to open the windows of heaven

and shower down upon them choice blessings.

At that moment, within me, my own heart turned over. I have come to value in a new way all that has been made possible for the young women, for example, through the tithes of all you good people—manuals and handbooks and opportunities and guides for their personal progress. How we appreciate your tithes and the offerings and the services!

Good and gifted people to guide and lead

Brothers and sisters, there are good and gifted people in this church. This is another powerful lesson that I have learned and that I am deeply grateful for. In each place that we have traveled in these years of service, I have repeatedly marveled at the able women leaders and the strong priesthood leaders who have been raised up in the far places where the Church is established. One gets off a plane, and there, among a sea of strangers, is one face of light. We recognize each other as disciples of Christ, as members of this church. It is wonderful. Again and again Heavenly Father has raised up good people who will guide the youth of the Church today to be accountable, responsible, and faithful people.

Concern for the coming generation

Now, this brings me to my concern as I leave this very fine opportunity that has been ours. We must raise up a generation that is prepared to make wise choices, to stand and to withstand. We must raise up people who will desire to make the holy covenants and keep them, and learn the word of God and share it. This has been a deep feeling within us as a presidency.

We have reestablished a wonderful, old tradition that many of us here grew up with in the old MIA. The young people are given a new scripture theme every year, and the girls memorize it and recite it each week. They

speak of it, they set their goals by it, and we hope they try to live by it. This year's scripture is the theme of commitment taken from 1 Nephi 3:7: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded." "I will go." We say it over and over again.

You parents listening to this conference have more responsibility than we do as church workers. I echo what has been said by the Brethren. This recitation of 1 Nephi 3:7 should become a reality in the lives of the coming generation, who must be prepared, as President Kimball told us several years ago, as a covenant generation to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord.

Those of you who are gathered here in this historic Tabernacle or tuned into the conference listen to the messages translated into your own languages. This is so you can understand the word of God. It would warm your heart to see the numerous translators in their booths below us here in the Tabernacle. Many of them are youth. The Lord promised his children that they would be taught the gospel in their own language. This Church is making that happen. My concern is that families need to teach the gospel to each other *in the language of God*, our Heavenly Father. In the home, when direction is needed, when a problem or misunderstanding arises, I pray that we may open the scriptures with our youth beside us and find the law irrevocably decreed upon which blessings are predicated. Reading the will of God in the language of God builds reverence and witness and commitment, and we will all live more purely.

I love the gospel. I love the Lord. I am grateful that there is not a doubt in my mind that these men here are his special servants. I am happy to have served in whatever way I have. And I am grateful that there are people like you who will take up the concerns that we have had, who will prepare these young ones, who are so precious. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Sister Elaine Cannon, released this morning as general president of the Young women, has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Benson

Elder William Grant Bangerter, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara B. Smith, who was released this morning as general president of the Relief Society.

Elder William Grant Bangerter

President Kimball, I know that I echo the feelings of everyone here in telling you that we love you, as you have so often told us.

Coming through the mists

I believe I have a good subject, since so many have already used it today. I would like to say something about coming through the mists.

As I approach this assignment, I am brought back to some guidelines, an expression made years ago by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., who said:

"There are, for the Church and for each and all of its members, two prime things which may not be overlooked, forgotten, shaded, or discarded:

"First: That Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . .

"Second . . . : That the Father and the Son actually . . . appeared to the Prophet Joseph in a vision . . . ; that the Gospel and the holy Priesthood . . . were . . . restored to the earth from which they were lost by the apostasy of the Primitive Church" ("The Charted Course of the Church in Education," an address delivered in Aspen Grove, Utah, 8 Aug. 1938, p. 3).

I testify that these stipulations are true because this knowledge has been

revealed to me by the unquestionable Spirit of God.

Warning against unrighteousness

In a time described in the scriptures as being filled with "wickedness and vengeance" (Moses 7:60), the First Presidency has sent out the special message to the Church in our stake conferences: "Staying on the strait and narrow path by keeping our covenants."

For us who claim leadership through prophets called of God, it is a good time to pay attention. For those who ignore the commandments, you may not receive many other warnings, "for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13).

The warning is against unrighteousness. That means sin and wickedness. This is defined by Peter as if he were speaking of this present time. He speaks of "denying the Lord," of covetousness to "make merchandise of you," of the example of the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of "the filthy conversation of the wicked, . . . having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin" (2 Peter 2:1, 3, 6, 7, 14).

Displays of wickedness

A moment's reflection on the displays in the media and in advertising, the inducement to use drugs, alcohol, and so forth, makes it very plain that for the sake of making money there is an attempt to buy or sell our souls, making "merchandise of you."

Newspaper articles and public expressions often carry the "filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7). We call it what it is: "A wicked and adulterous generation."

We are indeed constantly bombarded by a display of wickedness as it flashes before us, sometimes in ways that we cannot avoid.

Our society maintains the fiction that the display of such things as adultery, pornography, nudity, and licentiousness should be kept from the young people. Of course it should, but to set an age limit is pure hypocrisy. Perhaps greater corruption is being administered to the older and married generation. They are those who commit the adulteries. They are those who destroy the homes and violate the sanctity of families. The married ones obtain the divorces, break the covenants, cheat their spouses, and become dishonest in their commitments.

And, of course, in doing these wicked things they suggest that it is not so bad anymore. Since so much of the world accepts these actions, if we resist them or speak out against them, we will be scoffed at. We will be called prudish, Victorian, puritan, and self-righteous, as if we had become the sinners. We will be accused of being evil-minded in our failure to appreciate the "beauty and naturalness" of the human body.

Reaching out to boy in prison

A vivid example of the position of members of the Church in relation to the world was portrayed to us one evening in our sacrament meeting, now many years ago, when a man named Brother Smith came to speak. He told

us of his experience in working to rehabilitate men in the state penitentiary. A mother had asked him to reach out to her boy who was in prison.

In approaching the young man, Brother Smith was rudely rebuffed: "Leave me alone," was the tone. However, Brother Smith noticed a rather crude painting in the prison one day and on inquiry learned that this young man had drawn it. This inspired a new approach:

"Did you paint that picture?"

"Yes, I did it."

"I was impressed with it. I wonder if you would paint something for me."

"I don't know. What picture do you want?"

"I have never seen it," said Brother Smith. "I have only read about it."

"Where is it?" inquired the young man.

"It is here in this book," responded Brother Smith. "The Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi, chapter 8. Will you read it and see if you can see the picture?"

Later Brother Smith inquired if the young man had read it.

"Yes, I read it," he said.

"Did you see the picture?"

"Yes, I saw it."

"Will you paint it for me?"

"I don't know if I will or not."

Brother Smith then obtained the necessary materials for painting a picture and presented them to the young man, who for the first time responded with warmth and appreciation to be able to use good equipment, and he painted the picture. Brother Smith brought it with him to our sacrament meeting, and so I have seen it. It is, of course, the picture of Lehi's dream.

A vivid warning

Now, will you try to see the picture in your own imagination? All you who have read 1 Nephi, chapter 8, will recall the scene. If you have not read it, I wish you would do so and get the feeling and the vision of this picture.

The description is as follows: First, Lehi wandering through a dreary waste, then coming to a spacious field; the tree with the most desirable fruit to be happy, the love of God; Lehi's desire to share the fruit with his family; the rebellion of two of his sons; the pressing forward of many people to receive the fruit; the mists of darkness, which arose to obscure the path; the river of water along the path which could mean destruction; the rod of iron, which represented security in staying on the path; the huge building across the river filled with scoffing people; the susceptibility of those who had followed the path to succumb to the scorn and pride of those of the world; and the wandering away of those who had partaken of the fruit of the tree of life into forbidden paths of destruction.

I know of no more graphic description of the condition of those who call themselves Latter-day Saints in relation to the influences of the world than this great vision. This story is reality. It is a great prophecy. It is a vivid warning.

"It is my angel"

Let me complete the story of the young man in prison. Brother Smith pointed to an angel the young man had painted hovering over the chasm of filthy water and asked him: "Where did you get that angel? I don't remember any angel when I read about the picture."

The young man replied: "I know. I put it there. It is my angel. As I painted the picture, I began to realize that God had placed an influence in my way which could bring me to safety and redeem me from the course I have been pursuing."

This experience, of course, was the beginning of his recovery.

Experience teaches reality

Yes, the voices and enticements of the world make good seem evil and

evil, good. The false attractions to engage in immorality, to view that which is forbidden on your home video, to seek unbounded pleasure as if God did not exist, are, in reality, the yawning pit of hell, set there by the one who will try to bind you with his awful chains.

I learned once upon a time to fly airplanes. The instructor was flying straight and level. On the horizon was a range of mountains. Then he did something like this [demonstration of snap roll and spin] and I saw the mountain rise up and stand on end. It turned upside down and then continued to its normal position. He put the plane into a spin, and as we were falling and gyrating, I looked below and saw the whole earth turning as if it were a huge wheel. The vision was vivid. It looked so real. I have performed these maneuvers many times since: the snap roll and the spin. If I were to do them today, I could no longer make the mountain turn over or the earth gyrate. Why? Because experience has taught me reality, and now I cannot be deceived.

Hold fast to the iron rod

Reality for members of the Church is: "Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Father and the Son actually appeared to the Prophet Joseph. The gospel has been restored to the earth."

We have no excuse to deviate from the paths of righteousness. If we hold fast to the iron rod, we cannot be deceived.

In one of the hymns, we sing of Nephi, a seer of olden time. Nephi, of course, also saw the vision of his father Lehi.

To Nephi, seer of olden time,
A vision came from God.
Wherein the holy word sublime,
Was shown an iron rod.

While on our journey here below,
Beneath temptation's power,
Through mists of darkness we
must go,
In peril every hour.

And when temptation's power is
nigh,

Our pathway clouded o'er,
Upon the rod we can rely,
And heaven's aid implore.

Hold to the rod, the iron rod;
'Tis strong, and bright, and true;
The iron rod is the word of God,

'Twill safely guide us through.
(*Hymns*, no. 186.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Sister Barbara B. Smith will now
address us.

Sister Barbara B. Smith

President Kimball, President Hinckley, Brethren, and my dear brothers and sisters, this afternoon I feel somewhat like a former Chief Justice who explained his feelings on his ninety-fifth birthday anniversary. In his mind he rationalized, "It's just another birthday like all the others." But as he stood to acknowledge the occasion, his words revealed a love of life, a love of his work and of his fellowmen. He said:

"I have warmed both hands before the fire of life. . . . The rich spoils of memory are mine. . . . Mine, too, are the precious things of today. . . . The best of life is always further on. Its real lure is hidden from our eyes somewhere behind the hills of time" (Lillian Eichler Watson, ed., *Lights from Many Lamps* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951], pp. 267-68).

Like that grand old man, I love life. I love the work in which I have been engaged for the past nine and one-half years—the demanding, intense, but beautiful work of Relief Society. It has been so sweet to me that it has seemed but a fleeting moment in time.

Montage of memories of Relief Society

As I stand at this point of transition, a montage of memories crowd my mind—of family, my good husband supporting and patiently waiting for me, of my children and their mates struggling to arrange their busy sched-

ules to meet mine, and of grandchildren often being my examples; of the women with whom I have worked—a kaleidoscope of images, experiences, and impressions come to me of them.

I see my devoted, talented, loyal counselors, Marian R. Boyer, Janath R. Cannon, Shirley W. Thomas, and Ann S. Reese, and my secretary-treasurer, Mayola R. Miltenberger, all of whom I dearly love. I see the brilliant, gifted women who have served with me on the Relief Society General Board. And there is my personal secretary and the dear women of our staff, the hostesses who serve in the Relief Society Building, our public communications representative, Moana B. Bennett.

I also see the faithful stake and ward Relief Society leaders and the many, many sisters who comprise the membership of the Relief Society throughout the Church whom I have come to know and appreciate.

Warmed by fire of their lives

At this moment, I can only echo President Kimball's words: "God bless the women—the wonderful, wonderful women!" ("Women, Wonderful Women!" *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1958, p. 8).

Certainly I have warmed both my hands at the fires of their lives.

I have seen nobility emerge as I have observed them overcome personal

sorrows, disappointments, and tragedies. I have witnessed their compassion and loving ministrations toward their families and toward their neighbors.

I have savored their creativity, rejoiced in their achievements, and shared their joyous moments.

I have felt the strength of our sisterhood as we have met in Sunday Relief Society meetings, in women's area conference meetings, in socials, and in significant historical events such as the memorable occasion in Nauvoo, the birthplace of our beloved organization, where we memorialized that event with a beautiful garden of monuments to women.

"This is the day I saw"

I have read how Relief Society observed its fiftieth year with a great gathering of sisters in this Tabernacle. President Zina D. H. Young addressed the congregation and exclaimed:

"O that my words could be heard by all people, not only by you my brethren and sisters in this Tabernacle but that they might be *heard* and *understood* by all the people of this continent, and not only this continent, but the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and the islands of the sea" (Minutes of the Relief Society General Board, vol. 1, 17 Mar. 1892, p. 225).

I have come to feel that this may have been more than just a wistful expression of a great former leader. Perhaps it was instead a pleading with the Lord for a time such as this. Let me explain:

When I was a little girl I participated in a program here in the Tabernacle. At that time an impression came to me that I have never forgotten, even though I did not understand it then. I was filled with an awareness that sometime I would stand before a vast congregation of the Church in this building.

I thought this vision of my childhood was realized in the 1974 Relief Society conference when I was sustained as the general president of the Relief Society. But now I feel certain

that *this* is the day I saw. And perhaps because of prayerful people like President Zina Young our voices are heard proclaiming the truths of the gospel to all the world, truths that can be transmitted into the very hearts and minds of people who will listen and try to understand.

Testify of divine direction

In that spirit I am proud to testify today that our prophets and Apostles are men called of God. They will always lead the Church aright by divine direction and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The women of the Church have an important work to do. That work requires great strength of character, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a pure heart that will be a light unto the world and a bulwark of righteousness against the darkness that covers the earth with contention and evil.

Testimony

In all humility I declare my ever-expanding love for you. I assure you, too, that I deeply love our newly called and sustained general president of the Relief Society. I know Relief Society is in good hands. It will continue to grow and move forward in countless ways to bless the lives of all of the daughters of God.

I know this is true. I feel it with every fiber of my being, just as I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer.

May we all make the most of every moment of our lives, that somewhere beyond the hills of time we will be with them again, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Sister Barbara B. Smith, recently released as the general president of the Relief Society.

Elder Gene R. Cook will be our next speaker. He will be followed by

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Gene R. Cook

Thank you, Sister Smith, from all the sisters of the Church, and certainly all the brethren as well. We appreciate your service and that of Sister Cannon.

The meaning of home

Some years ago a fire erupted in the middle of the night and completely destroyed a family's home. A neighbor came by to console a seven-year-old, not knowing that he was about to be taught a great principle. "Johnny, it's sure too bad your home burned down." Johnny thought a moment and then said, "Oh, that's where you're mistaken, Mr. Brown. That was not our home; that was just our house. We still have our home, we just don't have any place to put it right now."

What a great principle taught by a child about home. What does that word bring to your mind—*home*? To some, an edifice. To others, a place to sleep, a place to eat, a place where worldly goods are stored.

Yet to others more spiritually inclined, it might mean where family is, where my heart is, a sacred place, a peaceful place, an escape from a wicked world.

Yet a deeper meaning

The still small voice whispers yet a deeper meaning. Home is heaven. We are strangers here on earth. My real home is not here, but there. My challenge is to learn how to bring about a home here on earth similar to the celestial one I left. The Lord said that we were taught "even before [we] were born." We "received [our] first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth . . . to labor in his

vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men" (D&C 138:56).

Thus, we were taught to labor in the vineyard, a good part of which, perhaps the most important part, was to know how to labor at home. We were taught by the Lord, by the best of all teachers. Perhaps, therefore, the re-learning here on earth, with our agency, is to largely experience and rediscover the teachings in the flesh.

How might I remember and rediscover what I once knew? The Lord answers, "Pray and I will make known unto you things from the foundation of the world according to your faith and holy works." (See Alma 12:30.) "I will bring all things back to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (see John 14:26 and Alma 12:30) "and will enlarge the memory of this people" (see Alma 37:8).

All are members of a family

At times when one speaks of home and family, some who are single, widowed, a single parent, or a grandparent might be tempted to feel these teachings don't apply to them. But may I remind all that when the Lord sent us here for our individual growth, he sent us to live with and be nurtured spiritually and temporally by a family. The Lord organized the whole earth this way. There is no other way to enter mortality.

Yet some still say, "I don't have a family. I'm all alone." May I remind you that you always were and ever will be a member of the family of God. You are his son or his daughter. It doesn't matter if your *parents or spouse or brothers or sisters are members, non-members, living, or dead*, they are still your family. And if you are righteous

and faithful to the end, no matter what your present status, you ultimately will be blessed as part of a family unit. Thus, it behooves all of us to learn and live, to the degree we can in our present situation, the principles governing family life in preparation for exaltation, whether we're a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or a child—whether we are *single* or *married*. This is the Lord's pattern, His expanded view of the word *family*.

Premortal family council

Thus, hearken all ye families of the earth, immediate and extended families, yea, every living soul, and the Lord will teach you of the sacredness of that heavenly organization called *family*, called *home*.

Brothers and sisters, for just a moment, please imagine yourselves as if you were in the premortal existence, in that council in heaven, yes, even a council of the Father's own family. Could the Father not have spoken words such as these to all of us: "My children, my children,

1. "Marriage on earth will be ordained of God unto man." (See D&C 49:15–16; D&C 131:1–4.)

2. "By divine decree, you will be copartners with God in bringing children to earth." (See Genesis 1:22, 28; 2 Nephi 2:22–23; D&C 132:63.)

3. "The family unit will be the principal agency for the spiritual and temporal nurturing of the individual." (See Mosiah 4:14–15; D&C 68:25, 28.)

The Father, perhaps continuing, might have said: "When you go to earth—

4. "Teach your children to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (see Deuteronomy 6:5–7),

5. "And to love and to serve one another" (see Mosiah 4:15).

6. "Pray in your families both morning, mid-day, and evening, and I will quicken your memory of these

teachings." (See 3 Nephi 18:21; Alma 34:21, 27; D&C 68:28.)

7. "On earth, teach them repentance, faith in Christ, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, priesthood covenants, and temple ordinances." (See D&C 68:25, 27; D&C 132:19.) Grandparents, uncles and aunts, you can help.

8. "Consecrate your family resources to the Lord. Be free with your substance." (See D&C 42:30–31; Jacob 2:17; D&C 119:1–7.)

9. "Provoke not your children to wrath" (see Ephesians 6:4),

10. "Neither suffer that they fight and quarrel one with another, thus sowing seeds of contention." (See Mosiah 4:14.)

Perhaps He continued, saying:

11. "*Fathers* to be, you will learn what *true spiritual leadership* is mostly at home, not so much in the world.

"*Mothers*, yours will be a sacred call unlike any other, to *raise these little children so that they will be like I am*. Unless you all become as little children, you will not be able to return home to me."

12. "*Learn your duty from living prophets and from the scriptures*."

13. "Lastly, because of the sacred nature of parenthood, I will *personally* teach you, through the Holy Ghost, those things that matter most. Stay close to me; humbly ask for help."

Cautions from the Father

Perhaps the Father continued, saying, "My children, there are also a number of cautions I would give you, because the influence of the world will be so strong.

1. "There will be *heavy influence to maintain families small*. However, remember, 'As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children. . . . Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them'" (Psalm 127:4–5).

2. "On earth, remember to keep your family responsibilities as

a *priority*. There will be many who will want to encroach upon your responsibility for *teaching* and *providing activities* for your family. Never forget that yours is the primary responsibility and that your ultimate success in all other endeavors will be in direct proportion to the attention given these *divinely appointed relationships*." (See D & C 88:119.)

3. "*Strive to be together*. Avoid activities and those that would pull you apart. Remember, where love runs deep, so can hurt feelings and frictions, as love may become frustrated." (See 2 Nephi 1:14, 21.)

4. "As children, be sure to *give heed to your father and mother*, remembering that I, the Lord, have placed them over you. Honor them." (See Exodus 20:12.)

5. "When you go to earth, children, remember that *once you are a parent you will always be a parent*. Whether it be a grandparent, a great-grandparent, or a parent as I am. Your responsibilities to preside go on through the generations to assist in turning the hearts of the children to their fathers. Resist the temptation to be uninvolved, retiring from your family and doing your own thing. As grandparents, your wisdom and vision will allow you to draw together your whole family which I, the Lord, have given you." (See Mosiah 2:5.)

Brothers and sisters, perhaps he concluded,

6. "My children, don't be too concerned about remembering these things. You will find that when these things are taught to you they will seem strangely familiar, as if you always knew them. You did, because you experienced it all here in your heavenly home." (See 1 Nephi 15:8, 11.)

"You will suffer affliction with your children in allowing them to grow and develop, just as I have suffered affliction with you. (See D & C

133:52-53.) But don't be afraid; I have given mine angels charge concerning you. Those sent from my very presence to be round about you, to bear you up. (See D&C 84:42, 88; 133:53.) This is your opportunity to experience what we have taught you. Follow the promptings. We love you."

Exalt concept of home

Brothers and sisters, in conclusion may I say, where possible:

Parents, whatever you are doing, *return home*.

Children, wherever you are, no matter what your failure, problem, or sin, you will always be loved by your family. *Go home*.

Grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, draw your families together. *Return home*. May the concept of home be exalted, because the Lord so organized it in the beginning.

I pay tribute to my grandparents, to my parents, especially to my wife, and to my children, in having made my home the best place in all the world. There's no place in all the earth I would rather be than at home.

And lastly, may the day come when these praises about home and family we will all sing:

O my Father, Thou that dwellest
In the high and glorious place,
When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold Thy face?

In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason
stare!

Truth is reason, truth eternal
Tells me I've a mother there.

When I leave this frail existence,
When I lay this mortal by,
Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?
Then, at length, when I've
completed

All you sent me forth to do,
With your mutual approbation

Let me come [home] and dwell with you.

("O My Father," *Hymns*, no. 139.)

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie spoke without further announcement.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

I rejoice in the call of Russell Nelson and Dallin Oaks to stand from this time forth as special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were called by the Lord through the spirit of inspiration and will stand as pillars of righteousness in his house from this time onward forever.

Gratitude for blessings

I am quite overwhelmed by deep feelings of thanksgiving and rejoicing for the goodness of the Lord to me.

He has permitted me to suffer pain, feel anxiety, and taste his healing power. I am profoundly grateful for the faith and prayers of many people, for heartfelt petitions that have ascended to the throne of grace on my behalf.

It is pleasing to that God whose we are when we fast and pray and seek his blessings; when we plead with all the energy of our souls for those things we so much desire; when, as Paul says, we "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Prayer moves mountains and saves souls

Prayer is the way and means, given us by our Creator, whereby we can counsel and communicate with him. It is one of the chief cornerstones of pure and perfect worship.

In prayer we speak to the Lord and he speaks to us. It is our privilege to have our voices heard in the courts above and to hear the answering voice of the Lord conveyed by the power of his Spirit.

Prayer changes our lives. Through it we draw near to the Lord, and he reaches out his finger and touches us, so we never again are the same.

Prayer is a great tower of strength, a pillar of unending righteousness, a mighty force that moves mountains and saves souls. Through it the sick are healed, the dead are raised, and the Holy Spirit is poured out without measure upon the faithful.

In prayer we bind ourselves by solemn covenants to love and serve the Lord all our days. In it we pay our devotions and offer our sacraments to the Most High.

Now, there are special prayers reserved and offered for those who drink the still waters and lie down in green pastures, prayers which are not uttered for those who yet dwell in the deserts of sin.

With these things in mind, may I tell you some of the prayers in my heart, prayers that I think will join with like feelings in your hearts, and will unite in one mighty chorus of praise and petition, of adoration and thanksgiving, as they ascend and are heard in the courts above.

Patterns of prayer

We do not give memorized, ritualistic, or repetitious prayers. We seek the guidance of the Spirit and suit every prayer to the needs of the moment, with no thought of using the same words on successive occasions. But it would be appropriate for us to use words that convey such thoughts as these in our prayers:

Father, we ask thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to hear the words of our

mouth, to discern with thy all-seeing eye the thoughts and intents of our heart, and to grant us our righteous desires.

We feel it is a great privilege to come into thy presence, to bow before thy throne, to address thee as Father; and we know thou wilt hear our cries. May we speak by the power of thy Holy Ghost.

Thanks for life and hope of eternal life

Then, in thanking the Lord for the blessings of mortal life, and the hope of immortality and eternal life, we might properly say such things as:

Father, we thank thee for life itself, for this mortal probation in which we as pilgrims, far from our heavenly home, are gaining experiences that could be gained in no other way.

We thank thee that thou didst ordain and establish the great and eternal plan of salvation whereby we, as thy spirit children, are given power, if faithful and true in all things, to advance and progress and become like thee.

We thank thee for sending thy Holy Son Jesus to be the Savior and Redeemer; to put into full operation all of the terms and conditions of thy great and eternal plan of salvation; to save us from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment.

O how we glory in him and in his blessed name, rejoicing everlastingly that he has ransomed us from temporal and spiritual death; that he is the one Mediator between us and thee; that he has reconciled us unto thee, not imputing unto us our sins, but healing us with his stripes!

We thank thee, O our Father, that thou gavest thine Only Begotten Son so that we, believing in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; that he, amid the blood and agonies of Gethsemane, and the blood and cruelties of Calvary, bore our sins on condition of repentance.

O how we love the Lord Jesus, who is called Christ and who is the Holy Messiah; who also is our Lord, our God, and our King, whom we worship in the full majesty of his godhood; and in whose blood we shall yet wash our garments, so as to stand spotless before him and thee in that great day!

Thanks for restoration of the gospel

With reference to the restoration of the glorious gospel in our day, prayers might include expressions along these lines:

And now, O thou God of our Fathers, we are grateful and rejoice in what thou hast done for us in our day.

With all our hearts we thank thee for the restoration of the gospel; that the voice of God is heard again; that the heavens, long sealed, have been rent; that holy angels, bringing priesthoods and keys and light and truth, now minister among us.

We stand in reverent awe at the realization that thou and thy Beloved Son came to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820 to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

We marvel that thou didst send Moroni to reveal the Book of Mormon; Moses to empower us to gather Israel from the Egypt of the world into the Zion of God; and Elijah to confer upon us the power to bind on earth and have our acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens.

How grateful we are that Elias brought back the gospel of Abraham, so that we, as children of the covenant, might have a continuation of the family unit in eternity!

Thanks for reconciliation with the Father

Of our reconciliation with the Father, through the atonement of his Son, it would be proper to say such things as:

Father, thou hast given us the word of reconciliation and hast poured

out revelations and visions upon us. We are thy people, and we desire to be worthy of the calling and election that is ours.

Thou hast wrought miracles in our midst; given us the holy scriptures, particularly thy word manifest in our day; conferred upon us the gift of the Holy Ghost by which we are guided into all truth, and by which our souls are sanctified.

For all these things we are grateful beyond any measure of expression, and because of them we shall praise thy holy name forever.

We confess our sins before thee and seek remission thereof, lest anything stand between us and thee in receiving a free flow of thy Spirit.

Prayer for building up the kingdom of God on earth

With reference to building up the kingdom of God on earth, our needs might be expressed somewhat along this line:

Wilt thou bless thy Church and kingdom on earth. May we be effective instruments in thy hands to build anew the Zion of old, even the New Jerusalem that is to be.

May we gather the lost sheep of Israel into the stakes of Zion in all nations as thine ancient prophets foretold.

Give us thy power in preaching thy restored gospel to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. Open the doors of all nations.

Let us fulfill our divine commission to prepare a people for the coming of thy Son. May we discover who our ancestors are and perform the ordinances of salvation and exaltation for them in sacred sanctuaries dedicated to thy holy name.

O have mercy on us; bear with us in our weakness, for our trust is in thee. Thou art our God, and there is none other like unto thee; and it is unto thee we turn in worship and adoration and thanksgiving.

Prayer for our temporal needs

As to our own temporal needs, I would feel no hesitancy in saying such things as:

We cry unto thee over our flocks and our herds, over the fruits of our fields and the increase of our vines and trees. Wilt thou temper the elements and preserve us from disasters, that our basket and store may be full.

We need food, clothing, and shelter; we need schooling and proper employment; we need wisdom in our business and professional enterprises.

Grant us according to our needs, giving us neither poverty nor riches, but feeding us with food convenient for us.

Prayer for blessings that lead to salvation

As to the personal blessings that prepare us for salvation, our thoughts might be couched in expressions along this line:

Bless us in our families that husbands and wives may love each other and cleave unto each other; that parents may bring up their children in light and truth; that children, thus brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, may honor their fathers and their mothers by living as their righteous ancestors lived.

O Father, there are those among us, not a few in number, who desire and are worthy to have eternal companions. Wilt thou prepare the way before them that they may have the desires of their hearts in righteousness.

There are those among us who are sick and afflicted, who suffer from disease, and who are not appointed unto death. O thou Great Physician, pour out thy healing power upon thy Saints.

O Lord, increase our faith, and let the sick be healed and the dead raised even in greater numbers than at present.

But above this, O thou God of healing, wilt thou cause him who came with healing in his wings also to heal us spiritually.

We would be clean; we desire to be a pure people; we need and desire and seek, above all, the companionship of thy Holy Spirit. We pray, as did they of old, that we might receive the Holy Ghost.

O Father, we rejoice in the gifts of the Spirit and seek them in greater abundance. Let testimony and revelation and visions and miracles multiply among us.

Let us know the wonders of eternity, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have yet entered into the heart of man.

Prayer of covenant and petition

And then by way of capstone, covenant, and petition, it would be appropriate for us to choose words that express these thoughts:

And finally, Father, we would be one with thy Son, even as he is one with thee. We seek salvation; we desire eternal life; we long to return to thy presence, and there, sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets and holy men of old, go no more out forever.

Let us see the face of thy Son while we dwell here as mortals. Let us hear him say: Come ye blessed of my Father; ye shall enter into the joy of thy Lord; thy calling and election has been made sure; thou art a joint-heir with me, and shall yet receive, possess, and inherit all that my Father hath.

And now, O our God, thou Everlasting Elohim, knowing thy mind and will with reference to all these expressions of thanksgiving and all these petitions for blessings, we covenant before thee that we will keep thy commandments and love and serve thee all our days.

Let this, then, be our covenant, that from this hour we will walk in all thy ways, blameless, obedient, faithful, true to every trust, having love one for another, testifying in word and in deed that we are thy people, the

sheep of thy pasture, thine elect and chosen children.

The reward—peace and eternal life

Language along these lines sets forth feelings and desires that well might be expressed to the Lord in prayer.

It is my faith that all who join in such choruses of praise and petition, of adoration and thanksgiving, and who strive to live as they pray, will gain peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

And such is my prayer for myself and my family and for all Israel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has been our concluding speaker. May I say, Bruce, we are grateful to the Lord that he has heard our prayers for the restoration of your health—first, the prayers of your family, then the ward, and the stake, and then the quorums of the priesthood, including your beloved members of the Twelve. And we pray that this restoration will continue in all the days to come.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene here in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M.

The nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the combined single adult choir and Salt Lake Institute choir. We are grateful for this lovely music this afternoon and for the beautiful spirit your music has added to this meeting.

The choir will now sing in closing "The Lord's Prayer." Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder William R. Bradford, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The combined choir sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Elder William R. Bradford offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD MEETING

THIRD SESSION

The general priesthood meeting convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 7, 1984.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The music for this session was provided by a father-son priesthood choir from the Cache Utah, Cache Utah South, Logan Utah, Logan Utah University, and Smithfield Utah regions, directed by Willard R. Kesling and Brent Farley with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Hinckley opened this session with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, we welcome you to this great general priesthood meeting of the Church. President Spencer W. Kimball is watching the proceedings on television in his apartment and has asked that we go forward.

He asked that we extend his love and best wishes to all of the brethren participating in this session. He was with us in the conference this afternoon.

We excuse this evening President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at his home.

For the information of the brethren in the outlying areas, we announce that at the first general session this morning Elders Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks were sustained as members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles to fill the vacancies created by the deaths of

Elders LeGrand Richards and Mark E. Petersen. Also sustained as non-lifetime members of the First Quorum of the Seventy were the following, and I wish these Brethren would stand as I read their names so that you can see them over here on my left: John K. Carmack, Russell Taylor, Robert B. Harbertson, Devere Harris, Spencer H. Osborn, Philip T. Sonntag. Thank you, Brethren. Someone said this afternoon that he had not heard of any of these Brethren, and I said, "You will."

Also Sisters Barbara B. Smith, Marian R. Boyer, and Ann S. Reese were released as the general presidency of the Relief Society; and Sisters Elaine Cannon, Arlene B. Darger, and Norma B. Smith were released as the general presidency of the Young Women. Sister Barbara Ann Winder was sustained as the new general president of the Relief Society, and Sister Ardeth Greene Kapp was sustained as the new general president of the Young Women.

These services this evening are being relayed by closed-circuit transmission and will reach members of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Marriott Center on the BYU Campus, and in at least 892 locations in many countries around the world. Also, they are being carried by satellite transmission to some six hundred and fifty stake centers extending from coast to coast in the United States and Canada.

We extend our greetings and blessings to our brethren wherever you may be.

We note that Elder John H. Groberg and Bishop Victor L. Brown

are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and Elders Paul H. Dunn and F. Enzo Busche preside at the BYU Marriott Center.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a unique choir, the father-son priesthood choir from the Cache Utah, Cache Utah South, Logan Utah, Logan Utah University, and Smithfield Utah regions, under the direction of Willard R. Kesling and Brent Farley with Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the choir singing "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!" Following the singing, Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See, the Mighty Angel Flying!"

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation

President Hinckley

The choir will now favor us with "Almighty God of Our Fathers." Following the choir number, Brother Devin Durrant, a tremendous basketball champ from Brigham Young University, will speak to us all, and particularly to the boys, about the importance of missionary work in his life. He is just as much a winner at the pulpit in bearing testimony of this work as he is on the basketball court.

The choir sang "Almighty God of Our Fathers."

Brother Devin Durrant

Brethren, I am honored to stand before you tonight. First, I would like to talk about a much-discussed topic in the Church—referees.

Referees make tough decisions

Before each game at BYU the captains of the two teams meet at the center circle with the referees and go through a meaningless ritual where nothing of real significance is said. But on the day we played Notre Dame, a referee friend of mine said something during that meeting that really hit home with me. He said, "Men, we referees are going to work hard tonight. We're going to make some mistakes, but you work hard too."

I remembered his words, and the game began. During the last few minutes, I went up for a rebound, and a bigger Notre Dame player knocked me

to the floor. As I lay there, I looked up, and the referee pointed down and indicated that the foul was on me. Surprised at his decision, I got up off the floor. I smiled at the referee and said, "You know, you were right in what you said before the game." He looked at me with a puzzled expression. I continued, "You said you were going to make some mistakes tonight, and you just made a big one." We looked at each other, and we both had a good laugh and continued to play.

Decisions under pressure

I have great respect for referees because they make many tough decisions which must be made in a split second and which are open to public view. But there are decisions in life that are much more important than those made by referees—decisions made in a

slow, deliberate, prayerful, private manner. One such decision is whether or not to go on a mission. While I was growing up I had a desire to serve a mission. But when it finally came time to send in the papers, I was hesitant. The decision became filled with pressures. I didn't know whether to leave after my freshman year, after my sophomore year, or after I had completed my college education. I fought with a multitude of inward thoughts and feelings. I also wondered if I had enough knowledge to go out there and give what was so precious to me to somebody else. I talked to a lot of people, and most of them willingly shared their opinions with me. Some said that I should go immediately, others said later, and some said I shouldn't go at all. I wonder, if I had asked you, should I go now or later or not at all, what would you have told me?

Perhaps you would have been like one of our great priesthood leaders. I went to him, and we talked about my situation. He listened with patience and concern. After I expressed my feelings about being able to play basketball when I returned, he said, with words that sank deep into me, "Devin, if you serve a mission and serve faithfully, when you return you will be a better basketball player than you are now."

Only you can decide

I had great confidence in that man, and I felt that he was moved by the Spirit to say what he did. I felt he was talking to me personally and not to all athletes who serve missions, because each case is different. He could advise me, my parents could advise me, my friends could advise me, but they couldn't serve for me. I was the one who was going, and no one else could make my decision. I had to make that myself.

One reason I desired to serve a mission was that I had seen the impact that serving a mission had on my father and mother. Many times in our family home evenings Dad would mention his

mission. He told us about his call. He had a desire to serve a mission, but when he expressed that desire to his father, his father discouraged him from going. My dad grew up on a chicken farm in American Fork, Utah. Because of failing health, his father didn't feel that he would be able to maintain the farm, and there would be no money to finance a mission.

Bishop Melvin Grant came to discuss the matter with my dad's family. When Dad's father told the bishop that his son couldn't go, Dad's mother stood right up from her chair and said, "I'll take care of the chickens. My son George is going on a mission."

And so he went to England. My dad told me that a few months into his mission he received a letter from his mother that said, "I think the chickens know where you are, because they've never laid as many eggs as they are laying now."

"Elder Durrant"

In April of 1980 I entered the Missionary Training Center and began to learn Spanish to prepare to serve in Madrid, Spain. While in the MTC, I knew that I was doing the right thing. In my heart I wanted to someday return to play basketball. Yet at the same time I decided that even if I never played another game of collegiate ball I wouldn't regret the decision that I had made.

In Spain I had the honor of wearing a little name tag that said "Elder Durrant." That title, *Elder*, was a greater honor than any I had ever before known. I had many experiences as a missionary. When someone accepted the gospel, I felt indescribable joy. When people rejected the message of the gospel, it brought me great sorrow.

Jose Manuel

One of my most joyous memories began during the summer of 1981. We had walked the city streets all morning talking to businessmen about the

Church. By noon we were hot and tired and ready to take a break. We decided to walk through a nearby park, and as we did so, we could see off to the side a group of young people. We decided to see if they would listen to our message.

As we approached, they looked at us with some suspicion. We told them we were missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They laughed a little and made a few mocking comments. It seemed obvious that they didn't want to listen to us. But there was one young man in the group who looked at us with a sincere interest. So we focused our attention on him. He had a guitar. We asked, "Would you play something for us?" He smiled, lifted his guitar, and began to play.

When he finished, we told him more about ourselves and our message. He told us his name was Jose Manuel. We talked for a few more minutes and then ended the conversation by asking if we could talk to him another day about our church. He replied he would be glad to listen to us and that we could find him in the park most every day taking his dog for a walk or playing his guitar.

As we left, we couldn't imagine this young man ever being baptized. A few days later we were in that same area. To our pleasant surprise, there he was. We asked if he would listen to us. He consented, and we pulled two park benches together, and my companion and I sat on one and he sat on the other. We looked into Jose Manuel's eyes and told him about Jesus Christ. Near the end of our message we told him about the Book of Mormon and that Jesus Christ had visited America after his resurrection. We challenged him to read about this great event. He said he would. We left the book, yet we had our doubts if Jose Manuel would ever even open it.

A few more days went by, and we decided to see how he had done on his reading assignment. To our surprise, he told us that he had read the part in the Book of Mormon that we had assigned

him. He explained that he had told his friend about what he had read. His friend also wanted to read the book, so Jose Manuel had given it to him. He asked us if he could possibly get another copy. We told him that we could probably work something out.

After that we continued to teach him the gospel. We saw him change his appearance and his heart. He wanted to be baptized.

Nearly three years have passed since we first met Jose Manuel in that park in Madrid, Spain. He is now a member of the Church. A few months ago he, like you and me, had a decision to make. He had to decide whether or not to serve a mission. Jose Manuel had every reason in the world not to go. He was just a recent convert. His knowledge of the gospel wasn't that extensive. He had lost his father a few years before, and his mother didn't want him to go. Other family members didn't want him to go either. He didn't have the finances to be able to serve for eighteen months. He also had to complete his military service before he would be able to even think about serving a mission. Everything was against his going on a mission.

Look for reasons to go

Every one of us, as we think about a mission, can find a number of reasons why we shouldn't go. We must each look beyond those reasons. The key is to look for reasons to go. And Jose Manuel had some reasons to go. He knew that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of the world. He knew that Joseph Smith had seen a vision. He knew that the Church was true. He knew that it had changed his life, and he wanted to go out and share that knowledge with others.

Jose Manuel had a desire to serve. He was called to the work. With the help of the Lord, he was able to work things out. That always seems to happen. He overcame the obstacles, and he's now serving in the Spain Barcelona mission.

You can do it

We're all faced with different obstacles that sometimes make serving missions seem difficult. In my dad's case, his father was ill. Jose Manuel's family didn't want him to go. I wondered about my basketball future. Many of the obstacles we face are those within our own minds. For just a minute I want to talk directly to you—just you. You who might say, “I have this girlfriend”; or, “I’ve got a good job and a car”; or, “I’ve never been good at schoolwork, and I know I could never memorize scriptures and all those discussions”; or, “I can’t talk to people who I don’t even know”; or, “I couldn’t be obedient to all the rules missionaries follow”; or, “I don’t really know the Church is true, so how could I tell others about it?”

To those who have such thoughts and feelings: if you don’t now have a testimony, you can gain one on a mission. Your girlfriend will be all right. You can learn the scriptures and discussions well enough to be effective. You’ll have the courage you need to talk to strangers. You can be obedient. You can do it.

Some of you may be fearful about your ability because to this point in your life you have struggled. Perhaps you’ve not been academically gifted or socially prominent. I agree that being socially graceful, well educated, experienced in leadership, and able to speak well are useful talents for doing missionary work. But there is something beyond these which can give a missionary his real power.

Love, faith, testimony

I was told recently of two missionary companions—one had many outward talents, the other didn’t. They had received a letter from a man and his family to whom they had taught several discussions. The letter told the elders to come by and pick up the Book of Mormon because the family had decided

they were not interested in continuing the discussions.

The more outwardly talented elder felt confident that by using all his social skills and all his learning he would be able to change the man’s mind. During the meeting he used every persuasive skill he could think of. The other elder listened. Finally the man agreed to continue the discussions.

Later, at the family’s baptism, the talented elder remembered the night with some degree of pride. After the baptism the man told him, “The night I changed my mind and continued to have you teach me was the most important night of my life. As you talked to me, my mind was so determined to not listen that there was nothing you could have said that would have caused me to continue. But then I looked at your companion. His eyes were focused on me. I saw in his face more love than I had ever known before. My heart felt a spirit that made it so I could not resist his silent message. I decided then that if this church could cause someone to love like that, then I wanted to be part of it.”

Outward social and educational talents help, but more needed than these are the inward talents of love and faith and testimony. In these talents we can all be equal.

Decisions, decisions, decisions

If your health will allow, make yourself worthy to serve. Push aside the obstacles and go.

I pray that the Lord will bless us in all of our decisions—decisions about missions, decisions about marriage, decisions about character, about dedication, about morality.

I’m grateful for the honor that I had of being Elder Durrant while in Spain. I know that Jesus Christ lives, that while he was on the earth he taught us the way that we ought to live. I know that he expects us as holders of the priesthood to take what he has given us and go out and share it with others. And as we do this, he not only blesses the

lives of the people we come in contact with, but he also blesses us. I know that the gospel he has given us is true. That's why I wanted to share it—because it means so much in my life.

I testify of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

I never felt so short, as I was looking at the length of his legs. Thank you, Devin, for that tremendous testimony.

I know that every boy here tonight was lifted by reason of what you have said, knowing something of what you have done.

We shall now hear from Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy—also rather tall. He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who is built for football instead of basketball.

Elder J. Thomas Fyans

Attaining physical excellence

Major league teams hire scouts whose job it is to continually survey the young upcoming players. Their trained eyes look for players who have consistently superior performances. It is not by chance that these young men are singled out from the rest. There is much preparation that goes into the attaining of excellence.

Such an athlete spends many years in training, trying to perfect every part of his performance. He exercises for long hours. He is careful to eat nutritional foods that build muscle tone, recognizing that what he takes into his body will have an effect upon his physical stamina. He obtains the proper amount of rest and observes other health laws. Attaining physical excellence in his life has been given top priority. Daily, weekly, and yearly goals are set and given great dedication. He listens carefully to his coach, who watches every movement he makes and knows his performance better than he does. Together they study videotapes of his plays and even analyze the minute details of his abilities through the graphics of a computer. He is careful to keep up with any new innovation or philosophy. As he retires at night, his thoughts turn once again to scrutinizing his performance with an

ever-constant vision of the day when he will receive an invitation to become a member of one of those elite teams that constitute the world of professional athletics.

Who's on the Lord's team?

We sing a hymn, "Who's on the Lord's Side?" What does the word *side* mean? The definition of the word *side* is one of the contesting parties in a game or sport; one of a group of players; a *team*.

Based on this definition, the question "Who's on the Lord's *side*?" could appropriately be rephrased "Who's on the Lord's *team*?" Some of the lyrics that might be appropriately applied to the priesthood are:

Who's on the Lord's team? Who?
Now is the time to show;
We ask it fearlessly:
Who's on the Lord's team? Who?

We serve the living God,
And want his foes to know
That if but few, we're great;
Who's on the Lord's team? Who?
We're going on to win,
Nor fear must blanch the brow;
The Lord of hosts is ours;
Who's on the Lord's team? Who?
(See *Hymns*, no. 175.)

Serving on the Lord's team does not happen by chance. President Spencer W. Kimball has told us, "This is something we are heir to; we were born to it, and all we need to do is qualify for it to obtain this blessing" (*Priesthood* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1981], p. 2).

An eternal calling

In Alma 13:1 we learn that "the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order."

In verses 3 and 4 we are told that "this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they have chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling. . . .

"And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren."

In Alma 13:9 we are told, "Thus they become high priests forever."

As you participate on a basketball team, or are part of a drama presentation, or sing in a quartet, or join a Scout troop, you are aware that membership in these groups usually lasts just a few months, or at most a few years. As there is a beginning to participation in these groups, there is also an end. And yet, as Alma taught us, we are high priests forever. The priesthood is eternal.

Example of President Joseph Fielding Smith

Now, you young men, let's carefully consider some examples from the

lives of our prophets as they have spiritually prepared for the priesthood. President Joseph Fielding Smith shares with us his feelings in these words: "When I was a small boy, too young to hold the Aaronic Priesthood, my father placed a copy of the Book of Mormon in my hands with the request that I read it. I received this Nephite record with thanksgiving and applied myself to the task which had been assigned to me. There are certain passages that have been stamped upon my mind and I have never forgotten them.' By the time he was ten years old he had read the Book of Mormon through not just once but twice. His brothers remembered of his hurrying to get through his chores as quickly as possible, and sometimes even leaving a ball game early, and secluding himself in the hayloft or in the shade of a tree to get back to his reading of the book" (Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., and John J. Stewart, *The Life of Joseph Fielding Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 57).

President David O. McKay

President David O. McKay tells: "I remember as a deacon chopping wood for the widows on Saturday. We met as a group of nine boys, held a short meeting, took our axes, went to the widows, and chopped enough wood for each to last that week."

And President McKay continues: "As a priest, I recall administering the sacrament and my failure the first time I offered the prayer. We did not have the prayer on a printed card before us then as is frequently the case now. We were supposed to memorize it. The sacrament table was just under the pulpit, and my father, the bishop, always stood right over the one who asked the blessing upon the bread and water. I thought I knew the prayer, but I had memorized

it privately, and when I knelt and saw the congregation before me, I became flustered" (*Cherished Experiences*, comp. Clare Middlemiss [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], p. 190). This challenge did not cause him to become discouraged, my young friends. He made additional preparation and lifted himself to a level of excellence.

President Kimball and the Bible

President Kimball recites the following story about a goal he made when he was still a young boy: "When I heard a Church leader from Salt Lake City tell us at conference that we should read the scriptures, and I recognized that I had never read the Bible, that very night at the conclusion of that very sermon I walked to my home a block away and climbed up in my little attic room in the top of the house and lighted a little coal-oil lamp that was on the little table, and I read the first chapters of Genesis. A year later I closed the Bible, having read every chapter in that big and glorious book.

"I found that this Bible that I was reading had in it 66 books, and then I was nearly dissuaded when I found that it had in it 1,189 chapters, and then I also found that it had 1,519 pages. It was formidable, but I knew if others did it that I could do it.

"I found that there were certain parts that were hard for a 14-year-old boy to understand. There were some pages that were not especially interesting to me, but when I had read the 66 books and 1,189 chapters and 1,519 pages, I had a glowing satisfaction that I had made a goal and that I had achieved it.

And he continues: "I am not telling you this story to boast; I am merely using this as an example to say that if I could do it by coal-oil light, you can do it by electric light. I have always been glad I read the Bible from cover to cover" (*Ensign*, May 1974, p. 88).

Reached Book of Mormon goal

Nearly every week I attend a stake conference somewhere in the world, so I am not able to attend the Gospel Doctrine class in my ward where the Book of Mormon is being taught this year. It really pained me to miss this privilege of catching the spirit of this very sacred other testament that Jesus is the Christ. So my wife and I set a goal to study the Book of Mormon at home. We determined to finish the 1984 course of study for the Gospel Doctrine class before this April general conference. We began in January; and on Monday, March 12, we finished the last of the forty-six lessons of the Book of Mormon course. It really felt good to accomplish this goal.

Spiritually exercise for priesthood fitness

You young men from all over the world are preparing to become members of a team. You have looked forward to this day with great anticipation. Hands have been laid upon your head to bestow the priesthood of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you might stand in His place in administering the sacred ordinances to the children of men. Think about it for a minute.

My companions in the priesthood, I love you with all my heart; the General Authorities all love you. We would invite you to spiritually exercise each day. This you would do at the level of your choosing. For example, read the Book of Mormon a few verses a day, or a chapter a day, fifteen minutes a day, or thirty minutes a day. You will know the amount of spiritual tone that you need to gain. You can accept this challenge, can't you?

You've made the team, the Lord's team, because of your superior, dedicated performance. What a privilege is now yours as you exercise with service and love, *build your endurance* as you prayerfully confront life's challenges, and *partake of nutritional spiritual food* as you read and ponder the scriptures to

build and maintain your spiritual stamina and muscle tone. Make your priesthood fitness a priority, applying the constant dedication of a professional athlete until it consumes your life, until it flows from you with nerves and mind conditioned.

And as you too retire at night, your hearts and thoughts and prayers will automatically turn, once again, with great desire to the perfecting of your

performance on the Lord's great priesthood team. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Fyans.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Boyd K. Packer.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

My beloved brethren, as a former counselor to Brother Nelson on two occasions, I add my gratitude for the call of Elder Russell M. Nelson, and affirm the nobility of his character and the greatness of his work in the kingdom. Likewise, I attest to the noble character of Elder Oaks.

"Give me air!"

I would like to tell you a story of a young man who sought out a wise man who was recognized far and near for his good judgment. He asked for his expert advice on how to attain new heights of achievement in his field of endeavor.

"Come with me," said the wise man. Taking the youth to a nearby stream, he immersed him and held him under the water. When the young man was released, he was nearly drowned and came up fighting for breath, gasping, "Air, air, give me air!"

"There," said the wise man, "that's the first lesson. When you want to succeed as badly as you wanted air, you will attain your goal. You will succeed!"

Desire essential for achievement

Desire, burning desire, is basic to achieving anything beyond the ordinary.

Why do I begin with this story? Because desire in everyone involved is the first step in the subject of my talk tonight, "helping inactive Church members to become active."

What I say, however, won't do any good unless what is said fits in with what the listener wants for himself and has a profound hunger to attain. In every instance, those who are successful love what they are doing. It is a well-known fact that the attitude, the thinking of each of us, must be right before we can do what's right.

Elder Dean L. Larsen beautifully summarized this idea in these words: "When we understand what is right and what is wrong, we are in a position to exercise our freedom in making choices. In so doing, we must stand accountable for our decisions, and we cannot escape the inevitable consequences of these choices. Such freedom to exercise moral agency is essential in an environment where people have the highest prospects for progress and development" (*Ensign*, May 1980, p. 76).

Fundamental principles

Jesus concerned himself primarily with the teaching of fundamental principles, and these principles had to do with the spiritual and mental condition of the individual. For the Savior knew that if one's mental state is right, most

everything else would be right. But if the mental state is wrong, little can be accomplished in a person's life.

It is no wonder, then, that Nephi admonished his people to "feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

"Enter ye in at the strait gate" (Matthew 7:13).

President Marion G. Romney expressed most clearly what is meant as follows: "It is not enough to do our best. Unless we do all we can, we do less than we ought. We must succeed in doing what is necessary. Unless we get the job done, it is not enough."

When I attended the university, I was involved in athletics, and since then have maintained my interest, even reading articles on the Winter Olympics. A sports editor wrote that for such a small country, East Germany, or as the world knows it, the German Democratic Republic, was doing exceedingly well. He said that they were not that much better trained than their competitors, but just a lot better prepared mentally, spending many hours in the preparation of the mind and the will. "Just good old-fashioned positive mental attitude" is all that is favoring the athletes from that country. (See Lee Benson, *Deseret News*, 16 Feb. 1984, p. D-2.)

General groups of inactives

In seeking to strengthen the inactive, we are concerned with four general groups:

1. Lifetime members who have never been active and, as a result, oftentimes raise their families in inactivity.

2. New converts who become spiritually disaffected and fall away, usually in their first few years of membership.

3. Active members who slip into transgression or have other problems that cause them to fall away. Often their problems include lack of knowledge and testimony of the gospel, hurt feelings that result in attitudes of unworthiness and guilt, and sometimes fear of participation in Church assignments.

4. Youth who are caught up by the philosophies or behavior of the world and stray from their Church commitments. Some of these youth are persuaded by worldly attitudes of instant pleasure. Some are influenced by peer groups that take nothing seriously until the realities of life force them to.

Spiritual conversion and social integration

This work of reclaiming the lost sheep, as Jesus so vividly expressed it, must receive top priority by every stake, ward, branch, and quorum leader. All inactive members should be considered candidates for activation regardless of their response to any previous approach. We must use kindness, patience, long-suffering, love, faith, and diligence. They must feel our genuine concern and untiring love.

For individuals to become fully active in the Church, they generally must experience a spiritual conversion and a social integration. We should strive to teach them the gospel and to extend warmth and genuine friendship and fellowship to them.

Sawing logs, but much more

Recently, I attended a stake conference and heard a story of member activation that moved me deeply. The bishop of one of the wards in the stake took a keen interest in arousing inactive brethren to Church activity. He knew that the first step was one of communication, that he must have a meaningful visit with each inactive brother.

So he began by telephoning one of them. The wife answered the phone and said, "Bishop, I surely appreciate your

call. My husband is outside, but I will have him come to the phone."

When the husband heard that it was the bishop that wished to speak to him, his reaction was as expected. He attempted to sidestep this phone call and responded, "Tell the bishop that I'm out sawing logs," and with a humorous touch, "Tell him I'm dead."

The brother spoke the truth more literally than he realized. It was true. He was sawing logs, and tragically, he was dead to the spiritual things of his life.

A good wife, however, is a mighty force in any man's life, and, in a kindly manner, she persuaded her husband to come to the phone.

Then the bishop, using the power of suggestion and in a friendly voice, said, "I should very much appreciate having a visit with you for a few moments this evening in my office." The brother couldn't refuse so warmhearted an invitation, and a meeting took place.

The testimony of the bishop and his deep concern kindled a fire in the heart of the inactive brother, and he agreed to join the temple preparation class that was about to begin.

Each session, taught by a tactful teacher with a great knowledge of the truth and an inspiring testimony, motivated the inactive brother. He resolved to strengthen his family and bind them together eternally through the blessings of the temple.

This good brother may still be sawing logs, but there is now much more. He has added for himself an indescribable dimension of happiness, as well as joy to the lives of each and every family member.

Change of life-style

In another ward, the bishop assigned his two best home teachers to work with one specially selected inactive family. The husband and father had been inactive for many years, even though he held the office of elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The couple was approached and asked if the special

teachers could come and teach them the gospel in weekly visits to their home. The family agreed, and the teachers proceeded to bring gospel lessons tailored to the needs and desires of the family.

The bishop also helped by interviewing the couple every few weeks. The husband usually went golfing on Sundays and had no desire to change his life-style at first. During one interview, the bishop said to the husband, "You've got to get going on spiritual matters so that you won't lose your fine family." This caused the inactive brother to think deeply about important issues, and within a couple of weeks he asked for another interview with the bishop and said that he had started paying tithing and that he and his wife wanted to set a goal of being sealed in the temple.

As this family became active, their whole attitude changed, and they seemed to be very happy to embrace the gospel principles and make the necessary change in life-style.

Strong testimony and change

In the case of yet another inactive family, the specially assigned teachers lived in the same neighborhood. The teachers first showed genuine friendship and neighborly concern until they felt they could talk with the inactive family in a serious manner. They sat down with the family one day and asked if they could begin teaching them the gospel in weekly sessions in their home. The teachers assured the family that they would not pressure them in any way and that their visits would be designed to teach the doctrines of the Savior and answer questions the family might have. Within a few weeks, the home teachers took the family to church, and soon the family began to attend on their own. The bishop interviewed the couple and helped them to set goals for the husband to be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood and for them to be sealed in the temple.

The bishop reports that it was touching to see this family with their five children sealed for time and eternity. The sealing room in the temple was filled with friends and members of the ward.

The family now bears strong testimony to the truth of the gospel, and many in the ward say they have never seen people change so much. The husband now serves in the presidency of the elders quorum.

Reactivation in Brazil

The president of an elders quorum in one of our outstanding stakes in Brazil—I love that great people, our members in Brazil—reported phenomenal success in reactivating fifteen elders in his quorum last year. I asked the question, “How did you accomplish this?” He said, “We and the home teachers visited them often. These inactive elders knew that we really cared for them.” Their testimonies were strengthened. They and their families are now active members of the Church.

The gospel is everlasting

The Lord has promised great rewards for those who reach out to strengthen their brothers and sisters.

The Lord has said in modern revelation, “And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (D&C 18:15).

I wish I could engrave on every heart what I so keenly know and feel. I bear unwavering testimony that our Heavenly Father and His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, rule and reign, and that we must all understand that the gospel is everlasting. It is forever and applicable to all, and each of us is to be held accountable.

May the Lord bless us in this important work, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you Brother Wirthlin.

Elder Boyd K. Packer will now speak to us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

I want to talk to my young friends of the Aaronic Priesthood. And I begin with a parable; and then I have a test for you.

A parable

Imagine that our bishop has appointed you and me to plan a picnic for all of the ward members. It is to be the finest social in the history of the ward, and we are to spare no expense.

We reserve a beautiful picnic ground in the country. We are to have it all to ourselves; no outsiders will interfere with us.

The arrangements go very well, and when the day comes, the weather is perfect. All is beautifully ready. The tables are in one long row. We even have tablecloths and china. You have never seen such a feast. The Relief Society and Young Women have outdone themselves. The tables are laden with every kind of delicious food: cantaloupes, watermelon, corn on the cob, fried chicken, hamburgers, cakes, pies—you get the picture?

We are seated, and the bishop calls upon the patriarch to bless the food. Every hungry youngster secretly hopes it will be a short prayer.

Then, just at that moment there is an interruption. A noisy old car jerks into the picnic grounds and sputters to a stop close to us. We are upset. Didn't they see the "reserved" signs?

A worried-looking man lifts the hood; a spout of steam comes out. One of our brethren, a mechanic, says, "That car isn't going anywhere until it is fixed."

Several children spill from the car. They are ragged and dirty and noisy. And then an anxious mother takes a box to that extra table nearby. It is mealtime. Their children are hungry. She puts a few leftovers on the table. Then she nervously moves them about, trying to make it look like a meal for her hungry brood. But there is not enough.

We wait impatiently for them to quiet down so that we can have the blessing and enjoy our feast.

Then one of their little girls spies our table. She pulls her runny-nosed little brother over to us and pushes her head between you and me. We cringe aside, because they are very dirty. Then the little girl says, "Ummm, look at that. Ummm, ummm, I wonder what that tastes like."

What would you do?

Everyone is waiting. Why did they arrive just at that moment? Such an inconvenient time. Why must we interrupt what we are doing to bother with outsiders? Why couldn't they have stopped somewhere else? They are not clean! They are not like us. They just don't fit in.

Since the bishop has put us in charge, he expects us to handle these intruders. What should we do? Of course, this is only a parable. But now for the test. If it really happened, my young friends, what *would* you do?

Three choices

I will give you three choices.

First, you could insist the intruders keep their children quiet while we have the blessing. Thereafter we

ignore them. After all, we reserved the place.

I doubt that you would do that. Could you choke down a feast before hungry children? Surely we are better than that! That is not the answer.

The next choice. There is that extra table. And we do have too much of some things. We could take a little of this and a little of that and lure the little children back to their own table. Then we could enjoy our feast without interruption. After all, we earned what we have. Did we not "obtain it by [our own] industry," as the Book of Mormon says? (See Alma 4:6.)

I hope you would not do that. There is a better answer. You already know what it is.

We should go out to them and invite them to come and join us. You could slide that way, and I could slide this way, and the little girl could sit between us. They could all fit in somewhere to share our feast. Afterward, we will fix their car and provide something for their journey.

Could there be more pure enjoyment than seeing how much we could get those hungry children to eat? Could there be more satisfaction than to interrupt our festivities to help our mechanic fix their car?

Is that what you would do? Surely it is what you *should* do. But forgive me if I have a little doubt; let me explain.

Feasting before the hungry

We, as members of the Church, have the *fullness* of the gospel. Every conceivable manner of spiritual nourishment is ours. Every part of the spiritual menu is included. It provides an unending supply of spiritual strength. Like the widow's cruse of oil, it is replenished as we use it and shall never fail. (See 1 Kings 17:8-16.)

And yet, there are people across the world and about us—our neighbors, our friends, some in our own families—who, spiritually speaking, are undernourished. Some of them are starving to death!

If we keep all this to ourselves, it is not unlike feasting before those who are hungry.

We are to go out to them, and to invite them to join us. We are to be missionaries.

It does not matter if it interrupts your schooling or delays your career or your marriage—or basketball. Unless you have a serious health problem, every Latter-day Saint young man should answer the call to serve a mission.

Even mistakes and transgressions must not stand in the way. You should make yourself *worthy* to receive a call.

The gospel is for everyone

The early Apostles at first did not know that the gospel was for everyone, for the Gentiles. Then Peter had a vision. He saw a vessel full of all kinds of creatures and was commanded to kill and to eat. But he refused, saying they were common and unclean. Then the voice said, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (see Acts 10:9–16). That vision, and the experience they had immediately following, convinced them of their duty; thus began the great missionary work of all Christianity.

Almost any returned missionary will have a question: "If they are starving spiritually, why do they not accept what we have? Why do they slam the door on us and turn us away?"

One of my sons was serving in Australia and was thrown off a porch by a man who rejected his message.

My son is big enough and strong enough that he had to be somewhat agreeable to what was happening or the man never could have done it.

All will not accept the gospel

Be patient if some will not eat when first invited. Remember, all who are spiritually hungry will not accept the gospel. Do you remember how reluctant you are to try any new food? Only after your mother urges you will

you take a little, tiny portion on the tip of a spoon to taste it to see if you like it first.

Undernourished children must be carefully fed; so it is with the spiritually underfed. Some are so weakened by mischief and sin that to begin with they reject the rich food we offer. They must be fed carefully and gently.

Some are so near spiritual death that they must be spoonfed on the broth of fellowship, or nourished carefully on activities and programs. As the scriptures say, they must have milk before meat. (See 1 Corinthians 3:2; D&C 19:22.) But we must take care lest the only nourishment they receive thereafter is that broth.

Work in Japan reopened

But feed them we must. We are commanded to preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. That message, my young friends, appears more than eighty times in the scriptures.

I did not serve a regular mission until we were called to preside in New England. When I was of missionary age, when I was your age, young men could not be called to the mission field. It was World War II, and I spent four years in the military. But I did do missionary work; we did share the gospel. It was my privilege to baptize one of the first two Japanese to join the Church after the mission had been closed twenty-two years earlier. Brother Elliot Richards baptized Tatsui Sato. I baptized his wife, Chio. And the work in Japan was reopened. We baptized them in a swimming pool amid the rubble of a university that had been destroyed by bombs.

Shortly thereafter I boarded a train in Osaka for Yokohama and a ship that would take me home. Brother and Sister Sato came to the station to say good-bye. Many tears were shed as we bade one another farewell.

Symbol of Japanese suffering

It was a very chilly night. The railroad station, what there was left of it, was very cold. Starving children were sleeping in the corners. That was a common sight in Japan in those days. The fortunate ones had a newspaper or a few old rags to fend off the cold.

On that train, I slept restlessly. The berths were too short anyway. In the bleak, chilly hours of the dawn, the train stopped at a station along the way. I heard a tapping on the window and raised the blind. There on the platform stood a little boy tapping on the window with a tin can. I knew he was an orphan and a beggar; the tin can was the symbol of their suffering. Sometimes they carried a spoon as well, as if to say, "I am hungry; feed me."

He might have been six or seven years old. His little body was thin with starvation. He had on a thin, ragged shirt-like kimono, nothing else. His head was shingled with scabs. His one jaw was swollen—perhaps from an abscessed tooth. Around his head he had tied a filthy rag with a knot on top of his head—a pathetic gesture of treatment.

When I saw him and he saw that I was awake, he waved his can. He was begging. In pity, I thought, "How can I help him?" Then I remembered. I had money, Japanese money. I quickly groped for my clothing and found some yen notes in my pocket. I tried to open the window. But it was stuck. I slipped on my trousers and hurried to the end of the car. He stood outside expectantly. As I pushed at the resistant door, the train pulled away from the station. Through the dirty windows I could see him, holding that rusty tin can, with the dirty rag around his swollen jaw.

A battle scar

There I stood, an officer from a conquering army, heading home to a

family and a future. There I stood, half-dressed, clutching some money which he had seen but which I could not get to him. I wanted to help him, but couldn't. The only comfort I draw is that I did want to help him.

That was thirty-eight years ago, but I can see him as clearly as if it were yesterday.

Perhaps I was scarred by that experience. If so, it is a battle scar, a worthy one, for which I bear no shame. It reminds me of my duty!

Warriors of the Restoration

Young brethren, I can hear the voice of the Lord saying to each of us just as He said to Peter, "Feed my lambs. . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my sheep" (see John 21:15-17).

I have unbounded confidence and faith in you, our young brethren. You are the warriors of the Restoration. And in this spiritual battle, you are to relieve the spiritual hunger and feed the sheep. It is your duty!

We have the fullness of the everlasting gospel. We have the obligation to share it with those who do not have it. God grant that we will honor that commission from the Lord and prepare ourselves and answer the call, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Boyd K. Packer has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top," following which President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

President Ezra Taft Benson

My beloved brethren, it is a joy and an honor to greet you tonight. I have enjoyed the program very much thus far. Brother Durrant, I am grateful for men like you. I love basketball. I was never very good, but I played for the Utah Aggies. And Father, who had seven sons, challenged Franklin County for a family competition. If there were any teams that had enough men, he challenged them. I guess, fortunate for us, we never had a taker. But in any event, I love what you said.

To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people

Tonight I would like to talk a bit about the great missionary work of the Church. Today the Church needs missionaries as never before! We are required to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation of the world. The Lord commanded it in these words:

"Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations, first upon the Gentiles, and then upon the Jews" (D&C 133:8).

This commission to take the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people is one of the signs by which believers will recognize the nearness of the Savior's return to earth. Concerning this sign of His second coming, Jesus prophesied:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in *all the world* for a witness unto *all* nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14; italics added).

Need thousands of missionaries

This task will require thousands of missionaries, many more than are presently engaged in worldwide missionary service today.

Many of you young men in the listening audience have decided to

serve a mission for the Church. We commend you for your preparation and worthiness and are confident you will receive immeasurable blessings, both in the mission field and in the years to come.

Some others of you have not yet made the decision to serve a mission. I would like to talk to you as well as to some of you older brethren who, with your wife, could serve.

You are needed in the service of the Lord today as never before. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few" (Luke 10:2).

Increased faith, devotion, and leadership

Those who serve a faithful mission return from that experience with increased faith, devotion, and leadership. They learn by their sacrifice what only personal experience and devoted service to others can teach.

A missionary learns, for example, that God can use him as an instrument to accomplish His work. He can say, as did Ammon, a Book of Mormon missionary, "This is [a] blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work" (Alma 26:3).

A missionary learns that he must be humble and dependent on the Lord. He learns to pray with fervor and sincerity, not only for himself but for others, and to be led and directed by the Spirit.

Experiences from first mission

It was while I was on my first mission that I discovered the constant need for dependence on the Lord.

I was a young missionary in northern England in 1922. Opposition to the Church became very intense. It became so strong that the mission president asked that we discontinue all street

meetings, and in some places tracting was also discontinued. The opposition started largely among the ministers, and it became very, very severe. They didn't know anything about us to speak of. I remember tracting one day when a lovely lady came to the door. We were having a nice conversation and the name *Mormon* was mentioned by my companion. Her husband came to the door in a Navy uniform, and he said, "Oh, you can't tell me anything about those old Mormons. I've been in the British Navy for twenty years. We sailed right into Salt Lake port, and they wouldn't even let us land." That was so typical of what they knew about us in those days.

My companion and I had been invited to travel over to South Shields, on the northwest coast, and speak in the sacrament meeting.

In the letter of invitation, we were promised there would be a number of nonmembers present. They said, "Many of our friends do not believe the lies that are printed about the Church."

We fasted and prayed sincerely and went to the sacrament meeting. The hall was filled. My companion had planned to talk on the first principles, and I had studied hard in preparation for a talk on the Apostasy. There was a wonderful spirit in the meeting. My companion spoke first and gave an excellent inspirational message. I followed and talked with a freedom I had never before experienced in my life. When I sat down, I realized that I had not mentioned the Apostasy. I had talked about the Prophet Joseph Smith and had borne my witness of his divine mission and of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I couldn't hold back the tears.

After the meeting ended, many people came forward, several of whom were nonmembers, and said to us, "Tonight we received a witness that Mormonism is true. We are now ready to consider baptism."

This was an answer to our prayers, for we had prayed to say only those

things which would touch the hearts of the investigators.

Joy in bringing souls into the Church

Yes, a missionary discovers the indescribable joy of bringing other souls into the Church. I have just recently had three grandchildren return from the mission field; two more are on their way to the field. I believe in missionary work with all my heart. It's good for any young man to have the experience of a mission.

One of the most inspiring missionary stories recorded in scripture concerns the fourteen-year mission of the four sons of Mosiah to their Lamanite brethren. They brought thousands into the Church, the record tells us, which caused one of them, Ammon, to exclaim: "My joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy" (Alma 26:11).

Brethren, no joy is equal to bringing another to the light of the gospel, for the Lord promised:

"If it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!"

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (D&C 18:15-16.)

Power of God and answers to prayer

A missionary learns that the priesthood conferred upon him is the power of God. Opportunities are presented for exercise of the priesthood through the ordinances of baptism, confirmation, and administrations to the sick. Almost without exception, our missionaries testify that God has not ceased to be a God of miracles! (See Mormon 9:15.)

A missionary learns that God, our Heavenly Father, can and does answer

prayers. He learns to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to be directed by that Spirit. He prays for his own welfare—to be humble and susceptible to the influence of the Holy Ghost—as well as for the people with whom he is laboring. Through these experiences of prayer and service, he learns to love the Lord with all his heart and to more fully love his fellowmen.

Every young man should serve a mission

The question is frequently asked, Should every young man fill a mission? The answer to this inquiry has been given by the Lord. It is yes. *Every young man should fill a mission.*

While every young man should serve a mission, we realize that every young man is not physically, emotionally, or morally prepared. As a consequence, some may be deprived of missionary opportunities. But all should prepare to go—to be worthy to serve the Lord. The Lord has said:

“And . . . every man [notice the words *every man*] should take righteousness in his hands and faithfulness upon his loins, and lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth; and declare both by word and by flight that desolation shall come upon the wicked” (D&C 63:37).

Prepare physically, morally, spiritually, emotionally

Some young men, because of transgression, say they are not interested in serving a mission. The real reason, of course, is feelings of unworthiness. If such young men would go to their bishop, confide to him their problem, and sincerely repent, they may yet fill honorable missions.

We, your Brethren, sincerely invite you to prepare. Prepare now to serve the Lord. Prepare yourself physically, morally, spiritually, and emotionally.

Visit with your bishop. Tell him your desires. Confide your problems.

Seek his counsel. Then pray to your Heavenly Father about this important decision in your life.

One of the Church's great missionaries, Elder LeGrand Richards, said, “I have had many people ask me what my greatest Church experience has been, and I unhesitatingly say, My first mission! That is where I began to really love the Lord and His Church and developed a desire to help build His kingdom.”

I hope that each of you young men in the audience tonight has a savings account and is looking forward to a mission.

Recently, in Dallas, Texas, I had the pleasure of addressing nearly two hundred missionaries. Among them were several young sisters. As I spoke to them, I had the feeling that they are a good example of a group of young people who are living in this wicked world and yet are not partaking of the sins of the world.

I rejoice in our youth. I am proud of them and grateful for them and know that the Lord is blessing and magnifying them. It is my great joy to meet with them whenever we go to a mission headquarters. They are choice young people.

Older members should serve

Now I want to say a few words to some of you older brethren. We have need for select missionary couples.

My father was called on a mission and left mother at home with seven young children, and the eighth was born four months after he arrived in the field. There came into our home a spirit of missionary work that never left it, for which I am deeply grateful.

Some of you who are grandparents can have more influence on your grandchildren by letters from the mission field than by any other means.

I remember so well, after the chores were done, sitting around the kitchen table as mother read letters from father. It seemed as though it was halfway around the world as she

mentioned the towns where he was laboring; but it was only Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Chicago and Springfield, Illinois; and other towns in the great Midwest.

Two of my sisters, widows—one the mother of ten, and the other the mother of eight—after sending their children on missions, talked to their bishops about going on missions themselves.

I well remember the day they called me on the telephone and said, "Guess what? We've received our missionary calls."

I said, "What missionary calls?"

They replied, "Don't you know?"

I said, "No, I hadn't heard."

They responded, "Yes, we're both going to your old field of labor in England."

The mission president assigned them to work as companions—twenty months without a transfer. I think that is some kind of a record.

My father's family later grew to eleven children. All eleven of us have now had the joy of filling missions. The last one recently returned from filling a mission with her husband in San Diego.

The Lord's service

To you young men and some of you older brethren, I again emphasize: you are needed in the Lord's service—missionary service—today.

I testify to all of you brethren within the sound of my voice that this Church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30). We are privileged through the covenants and ordinances of baptism and confirmation to be members of His church. Membership in this Church is the only means by which others may have the opportunity for eternal life. We have the truth, and we invite you to share that truth and the privilege of introducing His gospel to others who do not have it.

Learn to love Book of Mormon and missionary work

I encourage you to become familiar with the Book of Mormon, particularly. I remember an incident with my own son. He called me one day to ask if I wouldn't come up to his bedroom. When I got there, I found he had several books on the bed. He said to me, "You know, I have a job with my uncle herding turkeys this summer. I once heard you say that the turkey is the dumbest animal on the farm, so I assume I'm going to have time on my hands." Then he asked me to pick out the books I would recommend.

I picked up a little military edition of the Book of Mormon. I said, "This will fit in your hip pocket."

He said, "You mean to tell me I'm to take only one book?"

I said, "Yes, and you'll learn to love it, and you'll learn to love missionary work"—and he did.

Yes, this is His work. I know that as I know that I live.

May God bless us all with the Spirit and the desire to bring souls unto Him. It is our duty.

God bless, my brothers, that we may respond to this great need. It is the Lord's will that we do more in the great work of missionary proselyting. This I know and bear humble witness of, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

President Ezra Taft Benson has just spoken to us.

Before giving my closing remarks, I call your attention to the fact that the nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

As you leave this meeting tonight, we remind you to drive carefully and to obey traffic rules for your safety.

The beautiful music which we have enjoyed has been furnished by a father-son priesthood choir from the re-

gions of northern Utah. We express appreciation to all who have spoken tonight, and to those who have sung for us.

Following my closing remarks, the choir will sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King" and Elder Jacob de Jager of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, I think I would like first to express my appreciation for your presence, wherever you are gathered, and particularly thanks to the boys, the young men. Those who are in the Tabernacle came here very early and have been seated here now for three hours, in many cases. I know you are a little weary. It will not last much longer.

Report to shareholders

It is customary for an executive officer of an organization to make an annual report to the shareholders. I look upon you brethren as shareholders in this great work of the Lord, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I think I would like to give you a report, as shareholders.

I do so humbly and not in any spirit of boasting or arrogance, with the hope that the Lord will inspire me in that which I say. I do so further because there is an insidious effort going on to try to undermine the Church and destroy its credibility, even among its own members.

I am pleased to tell you that the Church is in good health. Many of you heard the statistical report read this afternoon by Brother Francis Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency. I should like to mention again some of the figures given by him and make brief comment.

Membership increase and convert baptisms

As of last December 31, the membership of the Church stood at 5,400,000. This represents a gain of

239,000 over the previous year. How wonderful it is to be part of a growing, advancing organization. Some of our critics and enemies challenge us to give the number of those who have left the Church during the year. I assure you that they are relatively few in number. Each time I see such a request I feel sorry for the individual. I wish with all my heart that he or she might have felt otherwise. However, we do not stand in their way. We will labor with them and encourage them to remain. But if they wish to forfeit all of the many marvelous blessings which come of membership in the Church, that is their prerogative. Some few have left, and of those who have left, some have tasted new doctrine. After a short time they have found it unpalatable, and have asked to be permitted to come back. We welcome them.

You may be interested to know that convert baptisms by missionaries dropped some during 1983. We fully expected that this would happen when we reduced the term of service for most missionaries from twenty-four months to eighteen months. This meant a 25 percent reduction in the time of young men serving in the field. I assure you that the drop in convert baptisms has been not nearly that great. All of this indicates that while our young men are serving for a shorter time, they are working more vigorously and effectively.

Share the gospel

At the end of 1983 there were 26,565 missionaries in the field. What a remarkable army of faithful and

devoted servants of the Lord, giving of their time and their means to the advancement of this great work of salvation.

But, as has been said, more are needed, many more, for the field is white and ready for harvest, and the laborers are still relatively few. Every man or woman who goes forth in this service blesses the lives of all he teaches. Furthermore, his or her own life is enriched by this selfless labor. Who has not witnessed the miracle of a missionary who has grown in a wondrous way while engaged in the work of the Master?

Priesthood leaders and fathers and mothers should begin while a boy is very young to point him in the direction of missionary service. Our sacrament meetings should be enriched with the enthusiastic testimonies of those who have returned from the field.

Further, we all need to be reminded to share the gospel with our associates. I emphasize the word *share*. I like it. I deprecate the use of what might be perceived as force and pressure upon those who live among us. I think it unnecessary. Neighborliness, and exemplary living of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with an awareness of opportunity to quietly and graciously lead them in the direction of the Church, will accomplish much more, and will be resisted less and appreciated more by those we seek to help.

Finances and building

I mention financial matters next in my report to you.

The finances of the Church are in sound condition. Because of the tremendous growth of the work across the world the demands upon the tithing funds are great. We have 896 buildings under construction at this time. This is a tremendous undertaking. Think of it—nearly 900 buildings. I know of nothing else like it. It is made possible by the consecrations of the Saints in obedience to the commandments of God. As you know, we have changed

the ratio of participation for construction of buildings. A 70 to 30 percent ratio was in effect until recently in most areas, and this has now been changed to a 96 to 4 ratio. The funds for most building construction come from the tithes of the Church. We are pleased that this change is possible.

The Council on the Disposition of the Tithes, established by revelation and consisting of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, has determined that the expenditures of the Church in any given year shall not exceed the income of the Church.

Temples

Six new temples were dedicated during 1983. We anticipate the dedication of an additional six in 1984, and yet another six new temples in 1985. This morning we announced the construction of five additional temples to be located in the areas of Bogotá, Colombia; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Portland, Oregon; San Diego, California; and Las Vegas, Nevada.

This is a tremendously significant thing. It has been a remarkable and wonderful experience to meet, along with my Brethren, with worthy and faithful Latter-day Saints in new temples in Atlanta, Georgia; in Tonga, Samoa, and Tahiti; in Santiago, Chile; and in Mexico City. One has to have that experience to fully appreciate it. In each instance people gathered from far and near—well dressed, clean, radiant men, women, and children, with great faith in their hearts and a living conviction concerning the sacred nature and purposes of these holy houses.

I have looked into their faces. I have seen the tears running down their cheeks as strong men and women have wept with love and thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the house of the Lord. They know—these tens and tens of thousands—that only in temples does the authority of the Holy Priesthood become effective in sealings that reach beyond life to all eternity. They

know that only through the ordinances of these sacred houses can the prison doors be opened for their forebears to enjoy all the blessings of the eternal gospel that a loving Father has in store for his children.

Miracle of tithing

It is a miracle to me that the Church is able to accomplish so much. It is a miracle made possible by faith, under a plan which the Lord himself established for the financing of his kingdom.

Tithing is so simple and straightforward a thing. The principle, as it applies to us, is actually set forth in one verse of section 119 of the Doctrine and Covenants. That fourth verse consists of thirty-five words. Contrast that with the cumbersome and complex tax codes enacted and enforced by governments. In the one case it is a brief statement from the Lord, the payment left to the individual and motivated by faith. With the other it is a tangled web created by men and enforced by law.

Conserving Church resources

The Church will live within its means. You may be assured of that. You may be further assured that we shall make every effort to safeguard these sacred funds to see that they are spent wisely to fill those needs which are in harmony with the great mission of the Church.

As a means of conserving Church resources, while at the same time expanding the opportunity for volunteer service, we are pursuing a program under which many retired brethren and sisters are serving on a volunteer basis in the temples and the departments and offices of the Church. You may be interested to know that the number so serving is approximately 5,000, which equates to approximately 500 full-time employees, with a consequent saving to the Church in annual dollar value of salary and benefits in excess of ten million dollars. These wonderful and dedi-

cated people work expertly and with love in their hearts to advance the cause.

By way of personal testimony, while speaking of the financial resources of the Church, we reiterate the promise of the Lord given anciently through the prophet Malachi that he will open the windows of heaven upon those who are honest with him in the payment of their tithes and offerings, that there shall not be room enough to receive the promised blessings. Every honest tithe payer can testify that the Lord keeps his promise.

Church education, Book of Mormon, satellite network

Our great program of Church education moves forward. The work of training students through the seminary and institute program is constantly being enlarged. As of the end of the year there were 389,258 students enrolled in seminaries and institutes. You who have been the recipients of this program know of its tremendous value. We urge all for whom it is available to take advantage of it. We do not hesitate to promise that your knowledge of the gospel will be increased, your faith will be strengthened, and you will develop wonderful associations and friendships with those of your own kind.

I reflect at times on the faith that went into the translation and first printing of the Book of Mormon. There were 5,000 copies in that first edition that came off the press in Palmyra in March of 1830. In recent years the Book of Mormon has been printed in editions of more than a million copies a year, and either all or substantial parts of the book are printed in sixty-seven languages.

I read these words from that sacred volume:

"O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!" (Alma 29:1).

We have not reached that state, but we have taken a giant step forward in that direction. Many thousands of you brethren across this land are joined with us this night with both voice and picture through the remarkable satellite network which the Church has established. Through its facilities we can declare the word of the Lord to our people from coast to coast and beyond to Alaska and the islands of Hawaii. We constantly are at work to expand the reach of this remarkable facility.

1,458 stakes, 14,000 wards and branches

Now another matter: It was my privilege to preside over the 150th stake of the Church which was created in 1945, 115 years after the Church was organized. Now, less than forty years later, there are 1,458 stakes, almost a tenfold increase in the number of stakes in Zion; 378 new wards and branches were organized during 1983, bringing the total at the close of the year to nearly 14,000. Small wonder that we must construct so many new buildings in which to house the Latter-day Saints for worship and instruction.

All of these matters that I have commented upon are statistical in their nature. For the most part they may be classified as temporal. But there is an even more important element with which we are concerned, and that is the spiritual quality of the lives of our people.

This work will not fail

We know that an increasing number are attending their sacrament meetings, there to renew their covenants with the Lord and to take upon themselves anew the name of Christ. We know that an increasing number are holding their family home evenings and spending a part of each Sabbath together as families, learning of the ways of the Lord. We have reason to believe that more and more are involved in the regular practice of family prayer. We

are confident that an increasing number are reading from the scriptures and drawing inspiration therefrom.

In recent months I have had the opportunity of speaking with sixty-three men and extending to them calls to serve as presidents of missions. One cannot have such an experience without coming to recognize the depth of faith found in the hearts of this people. Husbands and wives and children, at the call of the Church, are willing to leave the comforts of their homes, the association of their friends and loved ones, and their employment to go out to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Brethren, the work of the Lord is advancing as much as at any time in its history and ever more rapidly. As individuals we may fail in our part in it, but if we do so God will raise up others to take our places, for he will not permit this work to fail.

The cause of the Master

We are familiar with stories that the work would fail. When the Book of Mormon came from the press, the crude critics said it would soon be forgotten. When troubles grew in Kirtland, the enemies said the work would fail. When the Saints were driven from Missouri, those who drove them said the Church would soon expire. When the Prophet and Hyrum were killed in Carthage, their murderers said it was the end of this thing. When in February of 1846 the wagons crossed the river into the Iowa winter, the enemies of the Church said that it could not survive. When the Saints found themselves in this lonely valley, with crickets devouring their crops, there were even some of them who thought it was all over.

But the work has gone forward. The Church has never taken a backward step since it was organized in 1830—and it never will. It is the cause of the Master. It is the church of God. It is his work established in this latter day. It is the little stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands,

which should roll forth to fill the whole earth. (See Daniel 2:44-45.) God bless it as it moves forward on its great advancing course. And may each of us be found faithful and true and doing our part in advancing it, I humbly pray as I leave you my witness and testimony

of its truth and divinity in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder Jacob de Jager offered the benediction.

SECOND DAY MORNING MEETING

FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the general conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 8, 1984. President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and John Longhurst at the organ.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Choir sang "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise" without announcement.

President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

As those of you in the Tabernacle noted, President Spencer W. Kimball just came in. We are pleased and honored and delighted to have him here this morning. I said to him, "Shall we go ahead with the conference?" He said, "Yes, go ahead." We do so.

We welcome all who are present this morning in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on Temple Square in this fourth general session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We acknowledge those tuned to this conference by radio and television,

those who are seated in the overflow congregation in the Assembly Hall where Elders Dean L. Larsen and George P. Lee preside, and those participating through satellite transmission assembled in over 650 stake centers in the United States and Canada.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders, and officers and members of the Church from many lands who have assembled to worship and to counsel together in this conference.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with John Longhurst at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir opened these services by singing "Father, Thy Children to Thee Now Raise." It will now sing "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son," following which Elder Robert D. Hales, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will offer the invocation.

The Choir sang "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son."

Elder Robert D. Hales offered the invocation.

The Choir sang "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" without announcement.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Those great words sung by the Tabernacle Choir "Rejoice, the Lord Is King" become somewhat of a prologue to what I would like to say today.

Testimony that Jesus is the Christ

This is a glorious occasion. It is April, the season of spring in this hemisphere, when there is a new stirring of life in all of nature. Soon it will be Easter, the time when the Christian world commemorates the resurrection from the dead of the Son of God.

We who are assembled in this great general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints give our testimony to all the world that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of the living God; that he came to earth in the meridian of time, the offspring of Deity; that he walked the roads of Palestine, declaring the truths of the eternal gospel, healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the blind to see, and bringing the transcendent messianic message of hope to all who would hear; that he was taken by evil men, condemned, and crucified on Calvary's Hill; that he rose the third day, the firstfruits of them that slept, the conqueror of death, the master of eternal life; that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22); that he and his Father, the great Elohim, appeared to the boy Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820, ushering in this the dispensation of the fullness of times; that he stands at the head of this church which bears his name; that in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, the government of the kingdom of God is upon his shoulder, and his name is "called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

I bear solemn witness of him and of his unique and singular place in the plan of eternal salvation of God our Eternal Father. I bear witness of these

things by the power and authority of the holy apostleship in me vested.

Office of Apostle

If the Spirit will guide me, I wish to say something this morning of this wonderful and sacred office in the holy priesthood, the office of Apostle.

Yesterday we sustained two of our Brethren in this sacred calling, thus, after they are ordained, filling the Council of the Twelve Apostles. I want to give you my testimony that they were chosen and called by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. There was much of prayer concerning this matter. There was discussion with President Kimball, the prophet of the Lord in our day, and a clear statement from him, for his is the prerogative in these matters. There was a clear and distinct impression, what I choose to call the whisperings of the Holy Spirit, concerning those who should be selected to assume this most important and sacred responsibility. These who have been called are men of experience in the world and in the Church. They are men of learning and achievement in their respective professions, who have received the accolades of praise from their peers and from many who have admired them from near and far. But this is not why they were chosen.

Their service in the Church has been noteworthy. Since they were boys, each has been faithful and active. Each has served in a stake presidency. Each has served as a Regional Representative. They have been involved in many capacities of Church service, and have performed with excellence in each instance. But this is not why they were called.

Called as special witnesses for Christ

They were called because the Lord wanted them in this office as men who

have a witness of his divinity, and whose voices have been and will be raised in testimony of his reality.

Each is a man of faith. After they are ordained to the holy apostleship and are set apart as members of the Council of the Twelve, they will be expected to devote themselves primarily to the work of the ministry. They will place first in their lives, above all other considerations, the responsibility to stand as special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world.

Some will ask, why has the Church taken such competent men out of public service in their professions when they are doing so much good where they now are? I do not know. The Church has not done it. Rather, the Lord has made clear that these are they who should serve as his witnesses. There are others, well trained and equally qualified, to carry on what they have been doing. These two have now received a peculiar and unique calling to which the Lord, in his better wisdom, has beckoned them.

As with all of us, they are men who are human. They have their strengths and their weaknesses. But henceforth, for the remainder of their lives, as long as they remain faithful, their one chief concern must be the advancement of the work of God in the earth. They must be concerned with the welfare of our Father's children, both those within the Church and those out of the Church. They must do all that they can to give comfort to those who mourn, to give strength to those who are weak, to give encouragement to those who falter, to befriend the friendless, to nurture the destitute, to bless the sick, to bear witness, not out of belief but out of a certain knowledge of the Son of God, their Friend and Master, whose servants they are.

"One sent forth with certain authority and responsibility"

It has always seemed a remarkable thing to me that, although the Lord

chose twelve Apostles to assist him in the work of the ministry, and to extend it following his death; and that although Paul, who was an Apostle, declared that the Church should be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20)—notwithstanding all of this, the office of Apostle, and certainly a Council of Twelve Apostles, is not found to my knowledge in other Christian churches.

Nor is the office of Seventy, to which a number of men have been called at this conference. This is likewise an office that carries with it the responsibility of bearing apostolic witness of the name of Christ.

The word *apostle*, in its origin, literally means "one sent forth." If that definition were stated to say "one sent forth with certain authority and responsibility," it would properly describe the calling as it was given at the time our Lord walked the earth, and as it has been given in our time.

Luke records concerning the Master "that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:12-13).

It is significant to me that the Lord chose those who should walk next to him only after he had prayed all night concerning the matter.

Matthew records:

"And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. . . .

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them: . . .

"As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. . . .

"For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:1, 5, 7, 8, 20).

Apostles restored through revelation

This same office of Apostle was restored to the earth when the Church was reestablished in this dispensation. In the revelation on Church organization received in April of 1830, Joseph Smith was spoken of as one "who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church;

"And to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand" (D&C 20:2-3).

Brigham Young recounts the interesting circumstances associated with the organization of the first Quorum of the Twelve in this dispensation. In 1834 a group of the leading brethren in Ohio traveled to Missouri to assist their associates there, and then returned to Ohio. It was a long and difficult journey, most of it on foot. It was a time of severe testing. Brigham Young said:

"After we returned from Missouri, my brother Joseph Young and myself had been singing after preaching in a meeting; and when the meeting was dismissed, Brother Joseph Smith said, 'Come, go down to my house with me.' We went and sang to him a long time, and talked with him. He then opened the subject of the Twelve and Seventies for the first time I ever thought of it. He said, 'Brethren, I am going to call out Twelve Apostles. I think we will get together and select Twelve Apostles, and select a Quorum of Seventies from those who have been up to Zion.' . . . In 1835, the last of January or in February, or about that time," President Young says, "we held our meetings from day to day, and brother Joseph called out Twelve Apostles at that time. He had a revelation when we were singing to him. Those who were acquainted with him knew when the Spirit of reve-

lation was upon him, for his countenance wore an expression peculiar to himself while under that influence. He preached by the Spirit of revelation, and taught in his council by it, and those who were acquainted with him could discover it at once, for at such times there was a peculiar clearness and transparency in his face" (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:89).

Importance of Twelve Apostles

The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—were given the responsibility of nominating the first members of the Twelve in this dispensation. When they were selected, they were convened in a meeting held in Kirtland on February 27, 1835. Oliver Cowdery served as clerk in that meeting and wrote this in the minutes:

"President Smith proposed the following question: What importance is there attached to the calling of the Twelve Apostles, different from the other callings or officers of the Church?"

"After the question was discussed, . . . President Joseph Smith, Jun. gave the following decision:

"They are the Twelve Apostles, who are called to the office of the Traveling High Council, who are to preside over the churches of the Saints, among the Gentiles, where there is no presidency established; and they are to travel and preach among the Gentiles, until the Lord shall command them to go to the Jews. They are to hold the keys of this ministry, to unlock the door of the Kingdom of heaven unto all nations, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. This is the power, authority, and virtue in their apostleship" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 74).

Great and sacred ministry

As set forth in the further revelations, they are to work under the direc-

tion of the First Presidency and to go forth as "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (D&C 107:23).

When they need assistance in this duty they are to call upon the Seventy and then upon others as circumstances dictate.

Since the opening of the work in this dispensation there have been some eighty-four men serve as members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Elders Nelson and Oaks become the eighty-fifth and eighty-sixth men so chosen and ordained and set apart, as will be the case when that is completed. Great and sacred is their ministry. As one who for twenty years served as a member of that unique and remarkable quorum, I give witness to their brotherhood, to their devotion, their faith, their industry, and their tremendous service in advancing the kingdom of God.

Unity in leading councils

If I may speak now for a moment in a personal vein, I wish to express before you my appreciation for them. It is now almost three years since I was called by President Kimball to serve as a Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church. During a substantial part of that period I have humbly tried to carry a great and awesome responsibility. I have known something of loneliness and worry and deep concern. I have prayed earnestly for direction and strength and guidance. I have called on these my beloved Brethren of the Twelve. They have freely and generously given of support, assistance, and inspired counsel.

There is unity in the First Presidency of the Church. There is unity between the Presidency and the Twelve, perfect unity. There is unity among the members of the First Quorum of the Seventy and the Presiding Bishopric. I am somewhat familiar with the history of this Church, and I do not hesitate to say that there has never been greater unity in its leading coun-

cils and the relationships of those councils one to another, than there is today.

I love my Brethren. To a man they are loyal. They are supportive. Without hesitation they respond to every call regardless of personal convenience. They are true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now again, when these two are ordained and set apart, the quorum will be full. Two remarkable and wonderful men were lost with the passing of Elder LeGrand Richards and Elder Mark E. Petersen. Two remarkable and wonderful men have been called to take their places, called under the direction of the Lord, and sustained by the faith of the membership of the Church.

Holy Ghost bears witness to faithful members

The work goes on in majesty and power. The kingdom grows, solidly and consistently. Testimony strengthens in the hearts and lives of the members of the Church across the world. Herein lies the great strength of this kingdom. It is the conviction, solid and real and personal, that is found in the hearts of millions of Latter-day Saints who live in many lands and who speak a variety of tongues. Each is a part of a great society of believers. Each faithful member knows that God our Eternal Father lives. Each knows that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer and the Savior of mankind. They know these great salient truths because of the power of the Holy Ghost which bears individual witness to them.

God be thanked for the wonder of his work and for the mysterious and certain way in which it moves forward.

Appreciation for support

I express deep, sincere appreciation, not only for the support of my Brethren of the General Authorities, but of the Latter-day Saints throughout the world. I have felt the power of your prayers. I am aware of your sustaining hands and hearts. Most sincerely I

thank you for the manner in which you labor, unselfishly and with a great and moving faith, to advance the work of God and to assist in bringing to pass his eternal purposes with reference to his sons and daughters.

May God bless each of you wherever you may be. May your faith strengthen as you serve in righteousness. May your testimonies grow ever stronger as you drink of the fountain of eternal truth. May you be blessed in your basket and in your store as you walk honestly with the Lord in the support of his great kingdom. May the peace of Christ abide in your hearts and in your homes, I humbly pray in his holy name, even the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "We'll Sing the songs of Zion," following which Elder Russell M. Nelson, who was sustained as a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles yesterday, will address us. He will be followed by Sister Barbara Ann Winder, who was sustained yesterday as general president of the Relief Society.

The Choir sang "We'll Sing the Songs of Zion."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

A significant day

Saturday of April conference of 1984 has been circled on our calendar for many years, for that date was targeted as the first time in my life that our only son would be old enough to attend general priesthood meeting with me. Last night, that long awaited goal became a reality. Brothers and sisters, little did we know that on that day my name would be presented as a member of the Council of the Twelve.

Since we didn't know, our children didn't know either. Our married daughters telephoned us between sessions. One, who was expecting a baby, said, "Daddy, I was so shocked by that announcement—I think I am going into labor."

That she did.

So President Hinckley, your announcement from the First Presidency should get credit at least for "an assist." Our twenty-second grandchild arrived safely last evening!

Feelings of inadequacy and faith

A wide array of feelings has flashed through my heart since I heard the call that will change my life. The first feeling is that of personal inadequacy. That feeling is intensified as I think of the incomparable power of Elders LeGrand Richards and Mark E. Petersen, whose absence we keenly sense. They were, to me, dear friends as well as esteemed leaders. Then, as I look about and see the strength of those more qualified and able than I, I truly am humbled by this calling.

Fortunately, these feelings are blanketed by feelings of faith, for I know the words of Nephi are true: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). I have implicit faith in the Lord and in His prophets. I have learned not to put question marks but to use exclamation points when calls are issued

through inspired channels of priesthood government.

About twenty years ago, two members of the Council of the Twelve were assigned to select a new president of the Bonneville stake in which we lived. They were Elders Spencer W. Kimball and LeGrand Richards. That call they extended to me. Now, I am to be ordained an Apostle under the hand of President Spencer W. Kimball, to fill a chair vacated by the passing of Elder LeGrand Richards.

Commitment and gratitude

Feelings of commitment well up from the depths of my soul. My sweetheart, Dantzel, and I first made those covenants in the temple of the Lord over thirty-eight years ago, to consecrate our lives to the service of the Lord. Today, I reaffirm that promise, to give all I have to the building of the kingdom of God on the earth. In accepting this call, knowing that challenges, charges, and keys will be conferred and that buffetings will likewise come, I commit my effort, my energy, and my all.

Feelings of gratitude emerge as I acknowledge the goodness of my parents, and of all eight of my pioneer great-grandparents who were converted to the Church in the populous nations of Europe. All eight of them ultimately immigrated to the little town of Ephraim, Utah. I know they are watching the events of this day from their celestial windows.

To my dear Dantzel, I acknowledge my debt, as well as my eternal love. She is the fountain from whom flows the nourishing love in our home. Her sacrifices to bring our ten wonderful children into this world, teaching and training them, while always supporting me without a murmur through my responsibilities in the Church and in my profession, are monumental. We love our eight sons-in-law as our own, and are so grateful for an unbroken string of temple marriages that link them to us forever. For those precious

grandchildren already here and for the others on the way, we express our gratitude.

The discipline of divine law

While nominally I come to you from the science of surgery and its mother of medicine, in a truer sense, I have been forged from the stern discipline of law—not the laws of men, as mastered by our brethren of the legal profession, but the eternal and unchanging laws of our Divine Creator. The surgeon soon learns the incontrovertibility of divine law. He knows that hopes and wishes are sometimes simply powerless sham. Desired blessings come only by obedience to divine law, and in no other way. My lifetime thus far has been focused on learning those laws. Only as the laws are known, and then obeyed, can the blessings we desire be earned. To this extent, there will be little difference for me in the activities of the past and those of the future. The endless laws of the Lord are the doctrines taught by His Apostles.

I am grateful to my colleagues in the medical profession who have permitted me to assist them in the care of their patients and who now will continue to care for them. Their selfless service satisfies the two great commandments, to love God and neighbor. They have learned that one loves best who serves best.

Sustaining the servants of the Lord

I sustain the servants of the Lord, from Isaiah and Ezekiel to Joseph Smith and Spencer W. Kimball. For their confidence in me, I am deeply appreciative. To them and all mankind they serve, I express my love.

Now, I understand fully that the call to the Holy Apostleship is one of witness to the world of the divinity of the Lord Jesus the Christ. I know that salvation is centered in Him! Said the angel to King Benjamin: "Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and

through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent" (Mosiah 3:18).

The Prophet Joseph Smith was asked, "What are the fundamental principles of your religion?" He answered: "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" (*History of the Church*, 3:30).

The *creation* of the earth and all that dwell therein, the necessary *fall* that enabled men to be, and the *atonement* of the Lord are three fundamental components of God's eternal plan. Without that atoning sacrifice, there would be neither immortality nor eternal life.

Testimony and responsibility

His message is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ; and it is administered by the Church that bears His name. He directs the affairs of His church by the power of the priesthood and by revelation through prophets who proclaim His doctrine to all people of the world.

The testimony that I bear is but an echo of the resounding testimonies of the eighty-four who previously have received this call to the Twelve since the spring of 1820. I know that God the

Father and the Son appeared to usher in this last great dispensation of eternal truth. I testify that we are of the house of Israel, specifically of the lineage of Joseph, bearing the birthright and charged with the irrevocable responsibility to prepare the world for the second coming of the Savior. Then, numberless multitudes among every nation, kindred, tongue, and people will eventually join in proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. So I solemnly testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Russell M. Nelson, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. Some of you may not know that Brother Nelson is an internationally recognized surgeon, with a specialty in heart surgery. He has been a pioneer in his field and has taught his medical colleagues his skills across the world—in the United States, in Europe, in Russia, in China—and is scheduled to go to China for a month on a second trip to teach medical associates there the skills which he has acquired. I assure you, those who think you may need bypass surgery, that he has trained some colleagues who he told me are even better than he is.

Sister Barbara Ann Winder

This is very, very awesome. I think coming to a general conference of the Church and meeting here in the Tabernacle is such a great honor and a privilege at any time, but to have the privilege of being here in the presence of the prophet, when we know that his health has not enabled him to always be with us, is such a special thrill. And to hear the words of these great leaders has so touched and so moved me—I do acknowledge my gratitude to you. How

marvelous was the address of President Hinckley today as he bore witness!

More than an airplane trip

I know that it was more than an airplane trip that brought my husband, President Richard Winder, and me to this point. My husband has been serving as the mission president of the great California San Diego Mission, and we had to slip quietly away to come to this

conference this weekend. I have a testimony of the revelation and inspiration that the Lord gives. In spite of the inadequacies that I feel, I know that the Lord does help and cause his work to move forward.

Yes, I am the same Sister Winder, my dear elders and sisters in San Diego, who was with you less than a week ago helping you to remember those skills your mothers have taught you—keeping your shirts ironed and white and the buttons sewn on, carrying your scriptures. Even the little white handbook is still with me. I am that same Sister Winder. I am the same Sister Winder who, just two short years before that, sat in the councils with these great sisters whom you heard yesterday, learning and being tutored by them, my great teachers, along with their boards and their counselors, many of whom have been my dear, dear friends and teachers. I am so grateful to them and to the many wonderful brethren with whom I have had the opportunity to serve and learn. How I appreciate you.

Expressions of gratitude

We women are under the direction of the priesthood. I feel that I have been taught by those who have followed that direction to help bring women today through troubled times, to the point of being caring wives and mothers, faithful members of the Lord's kingdom, and contributing members of the communities in which they live. These are strengths that have been given to our Latter-day Saint women.

May I also express my gratitude today to my parents and to my husband's parents for their teaching of righteous principles and for the worthy examples that they have given us. It was a hard, hard asphalt that our plane landed on, but it didn't matter because there were our four children and their mates and our wonderful little grandchildren letting me know that home was here. How grateful I am to them for their support.

I want to express gratitude also to a husband with whom I have served for over thirty years in sweet bonds of marriage, having been married in the Salt Lake Temple, sealed together by President Harold B. Lee. We, too, have made commitments, and we have served together in harmony and unity of purpose, supporting one another through these years in various Church callings and assignments. I couldn't help thinking of the words of Paul as he admonished the Church to serve in unity and purpose, and as he taught that all parts must function for the good of the whole. So it is in a marriage and in a family that we must function together. I think we were taught so beautifully yesterday.

Love for sisters and desire for unity

I love the sisters of the Church, and I think I would like to relate a little from that wonderful priesthood section of the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. It also says the body has need of every member, that all may be edified together and that the system may be perfect. In a way similar to the words of Paul, the members of the Lord's Church today have been asked to have the same care one for another that they have for themselves.

And so it is that I feel for the sisters of the Church this love, and sense the worth of each individual. I want so, and desire so, that we be unified, one together with the priesthood, serving and building the kingdom of God here today and spreading the joy of the gospel to those who are so in need of it. This is His kingdom. We have a great responsibility to share it. I know that God lives, that he loves us. This is my testimony to you, and I pledge my service to you, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Sister Barbara Ann Winder, sustained yesterday as general president of the Relief Society, has spoken to us,

followed by the Choir singing, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire," following which we shall hear from Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir and congregation sang "The Spirit of God Like a Fire."

Elder Robert L. Simpson

Yesterday morning Elder Durham introduced his theme by quoting a bumper sticker message. From a graffiti wall in Los Angeles comes this one: "You can beam me up now, Scotty. I find no evidence of intelligent life down here."

Beauty of the gospel

Now, brothers and sisters, there is indisputable evidence of intelligent life down here because, thank goodness, Heavenly Father has told us that "the glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). Those who accept and live the simple light and truth of the gospel are indeed living an intelligent life. And that theme—of simple light and truth—which I would like to share with you this morning, was brought to my attention while serving as a young missionary under President Matthew Cowley, later to become an Apostle of the Lord. He taught us on frequent occasion that "the gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully simple and simply beautiful."

In the Holy Land

The truth of that statement was reamplified earlier this year as some of our family and a few friends had the privilege of walking where Jesus

walked. We marveled at the city of Old Jerusalem. Shepherds were still tending their flocks near Bethlehem. We strolled along those very same paths on the Mount of Olives. Then, after traveling north, we beheld peaceful Galilee. What had transpired here two thousand years ago suddenly took on rich, new meaning, as we paused to reread and ponder anew each appropriate scripture reference along the way.

The "living water" that Jesus talked about at Jacob's well with the woman from Samaria became current and real. (See John 4:10.)

There were tears as we stood in Gethsemane and pondered again those immortal words: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Also that simple but profound teaching at Calvary: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

As we stood by beautiful Galilee, we marveled at the simplicity of His unique but meaningful invitation to those being called. "Follow me," he said, "and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

Such quotes are typical of the Master Teacher, He who taught pure and plain truth, spoken in humility and with beautiful simplicity.

This reawakening to the superb teachings of the Savior while we were in Israel was most reassuring. How simple and pure are the concepts he left us. Indeed, Paul held the same view as he wrote to the Saints of Corinth, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

James said it another way: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy" (see James 3:16-17).

Indeed Elder Cowley was right: the gospel of Jesus Christ is beautifully simple and simply beautiful. Even simple enough that a Primary child can have a good idea of gospel basics by the time of that eighth birthday and the privilege of baptism comes along.

Become as little children

The faith of children was the center of some of the Savior's most significant teachings. Remember that occasion recorded in Matthew when the disciples asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

"And Jesus called a little child unto him." (I can just see the Savior as he tenderly lifted that child onto his knee in order to lend power to that teaching moment.)

Then he answered them: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1-4).

Without doubt the Savior had in mind the implicit faith and sincerity of a little child as he answered his disciples on that occasion.

Perhaps we should all take heed as we listen to our children pray. I remember well Elder Monson's story yesterday. When our daughter, Christine, was still very young she was always invited to take her turn praying in the family circle. We as a family always prayed that we might be a healthy fam-

ily. Some of her words came with difficulty. She couldn't say "healthy," and it always came out, "Bless us, Heavenly Father, to be a wealthy family." That sounded good to me—we just let her go on like that—but Heavenly Father knew what she meant, and wealth has eluded us.

That wise and noble prophet and teacher King Benjamin taught his people about putting off the natural man and becoming a Saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord. Then he added that we must become as a child, "submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things . . . , even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Simplicity of truth in chemistry, physics, and religion

We have always been taught that the gospel of Jesus Christ embraces all truth, wherever that truth is found. This should also include truth found in science. The simplicity of basic truth in the fields of chemistry and physics has always intrigued me. For example, there is the simple expression that H_2O is the chemical formula for water. Also fascinating is the fact that Einstein could express his mind-expanding theory of relativity by the simple equation $E = mc^2$. It almost appears that the closer we approach a basic truth, the more simply it can be expressed.

The best example of this in religious truth is perhaps the oft-repeated scriptural passage found in Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, wherein God states in a single sentence the total objective of all eternity: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Imagine, just twenty words to summarize the entire plan of eternal progression and salvation. I like that, because it is true. The statement is fundamental; it makes perfect sense. It isn't superfluous; it establishes a goal by which everyone can achieve success. All of Heavenly Father's children

become candidates for exaltation, and in the process Deity is glorified by our success.

Simple gospel truths

Most eternal truths are so simply stated that no one should misunderstand them, except perhaps a few like those of Jacob's day who "despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand" (Jacob 4:14).

Please consider for a moment these simple gospel truths, which are paraphrased in the interest of time:

The contribution of tithes and offerings will open the windows of heaven. (See Malachi 3:10.)

Conformity to the Word of Wisdom ensures better health, wisdom, and well-being. (See D&C 89.)

Confession to one's priesthood authority and then doing the sin no more can provide total repentance for all who are willing. (See D&C 58:43.)

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church" (James 5:14).

A celestial glory can be the reward for all who repent, are baptized, and continue in faith. (See D&C 18:22.)

As Paul declared so firmly and simply, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). Nothing has ever been able to alter these simple truths.

And finally one of my very favorites: "And the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Everyone wants to be free—free from guilt, free from selfishness, free from the bondage of bad habit. Yes, even political freedom is possible through God's plan of simple truth.

Gospel brings joy, fulfillment, and hope

But, of course, all of the foregoing about the importance of simplicity and plainness would be meaningless unless the end result were joy and fulfillment

for Heavenly Father's children. How thrilling it is to observe newly baptized Church members who have caught the Spirit—to see them respond to the gospel plan and, through their obedience to simple teachings, reap the promised blessings. This is especially apparent in so-called developing areas of the world.

Oh, that I could take each of you to Coimbatore, India, to meet with more than one hundred members of the Church who live in the most meager of all circumstances. They possess hardly any of this world's goods. Some days there is not enough food. Most have little or no education, but their lives have been changed for the better in a very short period of time through the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Their general health level is improved; more are now attending school. They are singing the songs of Zion with enthusiasm, and they are smiling much more than before. They have found hope. These are deprived people being taught simple truths about the Savior. The gospel is not complicated. They can comprehend it, and they're responding to it.

As we met with them recently in their little one-room meetinghouse (with a clean dirt floor, I might add), they seemed so anxious and eager to be taught. Curious neighbors could not resist the urge to linger nearby while meetings were in progress. They watched through open windows and through the open doorway. We were impressed by the contrast of those inside and those looking in. It was evident that gospel teaching had influenced not only the spirit that the members radiated, but also such things as personal hygiene, grooming, personal attitude, and a countenance that reflected a new-found something that was indeed beautifully simple and simply beautiful.

Deeper teaching through pure love

Few are aware of the pure Christian service being administered at refu-

gee camps in Thailand and in the Philippines by our missionary sisters. Basically, these sisters are restricted to teaching the English language and Western culture, but there is a deeper teaching that takes place through their pure love and sweet attitude toward these displaced people.

The story is told of a young camp refugee from Cambodia who was relocated in California. He found his way into one of our Church meetinghouses because the name of the Church on the sign out front corresponded with the one he used to look at each day on the name tag of the wonderful missionary sister who taught him at the camp. People don't soon forget acts of simple kindness. Pure love can transcend all differences.

Do you love the Lord?

Yes, the Spirit giveth light in this church. I am thinking of a wonderful new convert in England. In response to my asking, he told me about his conversion. He explained how he was kneeling at his flower bed on a Saturday morning preparing the soil for spring planting. All of a sudden an unseen voice from behind asked the simple question, "Sir, do you love the Lord?"

He said that he turned around, fully expecting to see an angel standing there; instead there were two angels, two Mormon missionaries. And his response was, "Of course I love the Lord. Please come in the house so we can talk about it." It was all so simple, so genuine. It was an approach that the Savior might have used.

The honest in heart

Not long ago a young American woman living in Taiwan felt that her taxi driver was taking her the long way around in order to increase the fare. She was in the process of venting her feelings in unmistakable terms when the young Chinese driver, obviously hurt by the accusation, stopped the cab, turned off the ignition, then turned around and said simply, "I would not do that. I am a Mormon." Calmed down and totally disarmed by the sincerity of his statement, she then asked what a Mormon was. She obviously found out, as she joined the Church just three weeks later. It all happens so simply when the honest in heart are involved.

Nephi, in foretelling the ministry of the Apostle John, described his teachings as "plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men" (1 Nephi 14:23). That our understanding and interpretation of truth may always be beautifully simple and simply beautiful is my sincere prayer for each of us, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Robert L. Simpson, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

Bishop J. Richard Clarke

The practice of truth

In the book of John, we read the famous dialogue between Pontius Pilate and Jesus of Nazareth. The Savior was an enigma to the Roman. He

asked, "Art thou a king . . . ?" Jesus answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

Pilate turned away, asking the question of the ages, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). He did not wait for an answer. I doubt he expected one. Pilate was aware that "truth" had been a favorite subject for debate by Roman and Greek philosophers for centuries, and remained the quest of philosophy.

It is not my purpose today to discuss truth in the abstract. I would speak of the practice of truth. It is both principle and application.

As William George Jordan taught: "Truth . . . is loyalty to the right as we see it; it is courageous living of our lives in harmony with our ideals; it is always—power.

"Truth . . . defies full definition. Like electricity it can only be explained by noting its manifestation. It is the compass of the soul, the guardian of conscience, the final touchstone of right. Truth is the revelation of the ideal; but it is also an inspiration to realize that ideal, a constant impulse to live it" (*Power of Truth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1935], p. 3).

Harmony between principles and practice

As Latter-day Saints, we are committed to the principles of truth. We seek the truth; we believe the truth; and we know the "truth will make us free." (See John 8:32.) To be genuine disciples, we must have harmony between the principles that we profess and the truths we practice.

We must be like the people of Ammon, who were "distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end" (Alma 27:27).

Be what God expects

Our souls must be more than "whited sepulchres," which appear praiseworthy but inside are hollow chambers bereft of goodness. (See

Matthew 23:27.) We must not only *seem* but also *be* what God would expect of His sons and daughters.

The practice of truth, the acid test of our commitment, is known by many terms—for example, *honesty*, *integrity*, *uprightness*, and *probity*. Especially like *probity*. It is taken from the Latin *probus*, meaning good, and *probare*—to prove, signifying tried and confirmed integrity. A person who has mastered probity by discipline, until it has become part of his very nature, is like a moral compass which automatically points "true north" under all circumstances. This individual strives for instinctive honesty, acting on impulse toward the right, without having to weigh the merits of advantage or disadvantage.

"[One] who makes Truth his watchword," wrote Jordan, "is careful in his words, he seeks to be accurate, neither understating nor overcoloring. . . . What he says has the ring of sincerity, the hallmark of pure gold. . . . His promise counts for something, you accept it as being as good as his bond, you know that no matter how much it may cost him to verify and fulfil his word by his deed, he will do it" (*Power of Truth*, p. 5).

"Keep your agreement"

Perhaps you remember the story told by President N. Eldon Tanner. A young fellow came to him and said, "I made an agreement with a man that requires me to make certain payments each year. I am in arrears, and I can't make those payments, for if I do, it is going to cause me to lose my home. What shall I do?"

President Tanner looked at him and said, "Keep your agreement."

"Even if it costs me my home?" the man asked.

President Tanner replied, "I am not talking about your home. I am talking about your agreement; and I think your wife would rather have a husband who would keep his word, meet his

obligations, keep his pledges or his covenants, and have to rent a home, than to have a home with a husband who will not keep his covenants and his pledges" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1966, p. 99).

Mormon standard of integrity

I had an interesting experience a few years ago while attending general conference. I went to purchase some merchandise at ZCMI and to cash a check. Being from out of state, I was sent to the cashier. She asked for some identification. I reached into my wallet and took out some credit cards. Inadvertently, my temple recommend came out. The cashier said, "I'll accept that." I said, "You'll accept what?" She said, "Your temple recommend. It's current, isn't it?" I said, "Yes, it's current." She said, "That will do."

Well, I pondered that all the way home. I thought, Wouldn't it be a great idea if we had a Mormon credit card? A card-carrying Mormon could be depended on to keep his word, to be honest with his employers, and to pay his bills as agreed. Then our professionals, tradesmen, and business people would perform without compromising their ethics for profit, each putting his signature on his work with pride; all of us striving for excellence in every way. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a "peculiar" people known for our honesty and the quality of our services? The Mormon standard of integrity should be the highest standard in all the world, for we are the covenant people of God. The Lord makes no special concessions for culture, race, or nationality; He expects all His Saints to live according to gospel standards.

The individual of probity

I believe for every law of truth we keep, there is a compounding effect. Our character is a complex of coordinated support systems, just like a

well-engineered bridge. Each truss, column, or girder contributes to the strength or weakness of the whole structure.

The individual of probity has integrated his virtues into a pattern of resonance, whereas one who practices selective honesty, to fit time and circumstance, is never quite balanced.

General David Shoup, former commandant of the United States Marine Corps, felt very strongly about consistency in practicing moral values. Commenting upon marines who were untrue to their wives, he said:

"It is not the actual act of adultery that is of so great a concern to me; that's merely the by-product, so to speak. The vital thing is this: A man who can somehow rationalize breaking the oath he gave before God and man when he repeated the marriage vows, is also a man who could, if he so desired, or when subjected to sufficient pressure, rationalize breaking the oath he took when he became a commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps. A man who can betray his wife and children for lustful purposes is a man who could betray his country for his own ends."

Integrity and honor not without price

Brothers and sisters, we often perform below our ideals, but our aim must exceed our grasp if we would rise to a higher standard of integrity. We all have old habits to break and new ones to form. Surely it takes a long time to perfect character, and we probably won't achieve it totally in this life. But success must be measured by effort and small improvements until we eventually reach our goals. Norman Cousins described integrity as "no luxury for the pious: it is the bread of life for the truly human . . . for the man who seeks not length of days, but quality of spirit."

The love for truth and the practice of truth are best learned in the home. The Lord has laid the responsibility with parents to "teach their children

to . . . walk uprightly before the Lord" (D&C 68:28). And again, "I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth" (D&C 93:40), for "light and truth forsake that evil one" (D&C 93:37.)

Children gain a love for truth by watching parents practice truth; they learn to emulate noble character. They need models of consistency, not just sermons alone. I believe one of the most important lessons a parent can teach a child is that integrity and honor are not practiced without price. They usually require sacrifice, almost always inconvenience, and often embarrassment.

Example of truth in action

With the permission of President Jeffrey Holland and his lovely daughter, Mary, I'd like to share their story of several years ago. It is an example of what I have tried to say today—not truth in theory, but truth in action.

Brother Holland begins:

"One night I came home quite late from work. My nine-year-old daughter Mary seemed visibly distressed. . . . I asked if she felt all right; she nodded that she did; but I guessed otherwise. I waited as she got ready for bed. Sure enough, she walked softly into the living room and said, 'Daddy, I have to talk to you.' I held her hand and, as we walked into her bedroom, she started to cry.

" 'I was at Grand Central this morning and saw a ladies' compact I knew Mother would love. I was sure it was quite expensive, but I picked it up just to admire it.' More tears and struggle to get it all said: 'It fell out of my hands onto the floor. I quickly picked it up, but Daddy, the mirror was cracked. I didn't know what to do! I didn't have enough money to pay for it, and I was all alone. . . . I put the compact back on the shelf and left the store. Oh, Daddy, I think I've been dishonest.' And then she wept and wept.

"I held her in my arms as that little nine-year-old body shook with the pain

of sin being expelled. She said, 'I can't sleep and I can't eat and I can't say my prayers. What will I do? I won't ever get it out of my mind.'

"Well, Mother joined us and we talked quite a while that night. We told her that we were very, very proud of her honesty . . . and we would have been disappointed if she had been able to eat or sleep very well. I told her . . . the compact probably wouldn't cost *too* much, and that we would go back to the store manager, tell him of the problem, and, between the two of us, cover the cost. If the compact was still there, [perhaps we could] buy it for Mom. That little cracked mirror could be a reminder for as long as she owned it that her little girl was unfailingly honest and spiritually sensitive. . . .

"The tears gradually stopped, her little body began to relax, and Mary said, 'I think now I can say my prayers' " ("The Excellence of the Actors," unpublished manuscript, BYU faculty assembly, 1978).

Walk uprightly and work righteousness

We have tried to teach our children that the practice of truth is the premier virtue. If they master that great principle, all else will fall into place.

As Jesus of Nazareth was the embodiment of truth, so should we bear witness. We may talk about our religion, we may discuss marvelous manifestations and revealed gifts and powers, we may profess high ideals and noble values; but the proof of our commitment lies in our performance in the daily transaction of our life.

Let us covenant as did Job, even in his extremity: "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

"My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live" (Job 27:5-6).

The Psalmist posed the question: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" (Psalm 15:1).

The answer: "He that walketh up-rightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:2).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Ye Disconsolate" without announcement.

President Hinckley

Bishop J. Richard Clarke, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, spoke to us, followed by the Choir singing "Come, Ye Disconsolate."

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us, and he will be our concluding speaker of this session.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

I would like to refer to one of the parables of the Savior found in the book of Luke, the parable commencing with this verse: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican" (Luke 18:10).

Simple yet profound parables of Christ

These words begin one of the many stories told by the Master Teacher during the three years of his earthly ministry. There is nothing in all literature equal to the parables of Christ. His teachings were as impressive to his listeners then as they are today to those who read his words. They are so simple a child can understand, yet profound enough for the sage and philosopher. The similitudes he used were taken from pictures of human life and commonplace incidents that could be understood by every listener—the sower, the lost sheep, a woman baking bread, the fig tree, a good Samaritan, the prodigal son.

Each of the parables spoken by the Savior seems to teach a principle or give an admonition regarding the attributes necessary to qualify for exaltation. Some of these are faith, repentance, baptism, development of talents, forgiveness, perseverance in doing good, being a profitable steward, charity, mercy, and obedience. These parables were usually given by him to add to the knowledge of persons already spiritually enlightened, particu-

larly the disciples, although they were sometimes directed to other persons and audiences.

To self-righteous who lack humility

The parable from which I read the first verse was directed to more than just his disciples. Even though the subject matter was a Pharisee and a publican, it was not intended for Pharisees or publicans expressly, but for the benefit of the self-righteous who lack the virtues of humility and who use self-righteousness as a claim to exaltation. In this parable the Savior spoke few words, yet the lesson taught is clear. This is the whole story he told, as recorded by Luke:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

"I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every man that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that

humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:10-14).

Pharisees, strictest of Jewish sects

Apparently the scene is laid in Jerusalem at the temple, where two men had gone to pray during the time of day for private prayers. It is interesting that the Master selected a Pharisee and a publican as the actors in the story, representing the two religious extremes in Jewish society.

The Pharisees were the largest and most influential of the three sects of Judaism at the time of Christ. The Pharisaic movement in the Jewish state rose from the ranks of the lay lawyers of the Greek period to become the leading religious and political party. The main characteristics of the Pharisees were their legalism and their legalistic inflexibility. They were known for their strict accuracy in the interpretation of the law and their scrupulous adherence to living the law in every minute detail. This caused them to be known as the strictest of Jewish sects in observing their tradition. They shunned the non-Pharisee as being unclean, thereby keeping themselves separated from those they considered to be the common people.

Paul was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and he was educated by Gamaliel, a Pharisee. On three different occasions he declared himself to be a member of the sect. The first was at the time he was on trial, then in his plea before Agrippa, and later in writing to the Philippians. This training as a Pharisee made him an extremist in his devotion to the Jewish law, which answers the question as to why he was such a zealous persecutor of the Christians prior to his experience on Damascus Road.

Publicans, despised tax collectors

Publicans were tax collectors and were looked down upon with contempt. Ordinary taxes, such as land taxes, were collected by the Roman officials;

but toll taxes for transporting goods were usually collected by Jews under contract with the Romans. These collectors, or publicans, made a profit on the transactions. Their fellow countrymen had no higher regard for them than for thieves and robbers. The trade lent itself to graft and extortion, and the publicans had the reputation of having some of the tax money stick to their own fingers.

The Jews were smarting under Roman occupation and domination, and they considered the payment of taxes as a tribute to Caesar. Jews who made such collections for the Romans were regarded as traitors and as despicable for selling their services to a foreign conqueror. Publicans and members of their families were considered so contemptible that they were not allowed to hold public office or give testimony in a Jewish court. We remember that Matthew was a publican, a gatherer of taxes, until his calling to be a disciple, and, of course, he too was despised by the Jews, as were the others who followed that occupation.

Boastful spirit and pride

To know the background of these two men who came from the opposite extremes of Jewish society helps us to understand this parable of the Pharisee and tax collector and why they prayed as they did in the temple.

After the two men entered the temple, the Pharisee stood by himself, apart from the tax collector, and thanked God that he was "not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers" who fail to live the commandments of the law, "or even as this publican," he said (Luke 18:11). Though he was in form thanking God, his self-centered thoughts were on his own self-righteousness. In justification he added: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:12). His prayer was not one of thankfulness, but of boastfulness. The boastful spirit and pride of this Pharisee is not unlike that of Rabbi Simeon ben

Jochai, mentioned in the Talmud, who said: "If there were only thirty righteous persons in the world, I and my son should make two of them; but if there were but twenty, I and my son would be of the number; and if there were but ten, I and my son would be of the number; and if there were but five, I and my son would be of the five; and if there were but two, I and my son would be those two; and if there were but one, myself should be that one" (Bereshith Rabba, s. 35, vol. 34).

Appeal for mercy and forgiveness

The tax collector standing afar off, feeling the weight of his iniquities pressing down upon him, and being conscious of his sins and unworthiness to stand before God, cast his eyes to the ground and "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven" when he prayed (Luke 18:13). In deep distress he beat upon his breast and pleaded, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

Could there be greater contrast in the prayers of two men? The Pharisee stood apart because he believed he was better than other men, whom he considered as common. The publican stood apart also, but it was because he felt himself unworthy. The Pharisee thought of no one other than himself and regarded everyone else a sinner, whereas the publican thought of everyone else as righteous as compared with himself, a sinner. The Pharisee asked nothing of God, but relied upon his own self-righteousness. The publican appealed to God for mercy and forgiveness of his sins.

Continuing the story, Jesus then said: "I tell you, this man," referring to the publican, the despised tax collector, "went down to his house justified, rather than the other" (Luke 18:14). In other words, the Lord said he was absolved, forgiven, or vindicated.

This statement gives meaning to what the Savior said on another occasion: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes

and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

Humility—attribute of godliness

The Master then concluded the parable with these words: "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14). These are almost the same words spoken by him in the house of one of the chief Pharisees. (See Luke 14:11.)

Humility is an attribute of godliness possessed by true Saints. It is easy to understand why a proud man fails. He is content to rely upon himself only. This is evident in those who seek social position or who push others aside to gain position in fields of business, government, education, sports, or other endeavors. Our genuine concern should be for the success of others. The proud man shuts himself off from God, and when he does he no longer lives in the light. The Apostle Peter made this comment:

"Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

From the beginning of time there have been those with pride and others who have followed divine admonition to be humble. History bears record that those who have exalted themselves have been abased, but the humble have been exalted. On every busy street there are Pharisees and publicans. It may be that one of them bears our name.

May the Lord bless us as we strive to understand and follow his teachings in my prayer, in his holy name, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has been our concluding speaker.

We express appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have offered their facilities as a public service to make the proceedings of this conference available to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The Tabernacle Choir will sing in closing "Benediction." The benedic-

tion prayer will then be pronounced by Elder James M. Paramore, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Choir sang "Benediction."

Elder James M. Paramore offered the benediction prayer.

SECOND DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

FIFTH SESSION

The fifth and final general session of the 153rd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 8, 1984.

President Ezra Taft Benson, President of the Council of the Twelve, conducted.

Music was provided by the Tabernacle Choir directed by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Benson made the following remarks at the outset of the meeting:

President Ezra Taft Benson

The First Presidency has asked that I conduct this concluding session of the conference.

It is wonderful to have President Spencer W. Kimball with us. He is constantly surprising us. Our love goes to President Marion G. Romney, who is watching at home.

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the fifth and concluding session of the 154th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall where Elders Richard G. Scott and Robert E. Wells preside.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by radio, television, and satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Robert Cundick at the organ, is providing the music for this session.

The Choir will begin this service by singing "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth." The invocation will be offered by Elder Adney Y. Komatsu, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir sang "Jehovah, Lord of Heaven and Earth."

Elder Adney Y. Komatsu offered the invocation.

President Benson

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "A Song of Praise." Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder

James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The Choir sang "A Song of Praise."

Elder James E. Faust

I welcome all of the new General Authorities. I rejoice in the calls of Elder Oaks and Elder Nelson to the Council of Twelve Apostles. Brother Nelson has touched my heart deeper than any other man. He has held my heart in his hands and has cut into it and sewn in eight bypasses. He and the Lord literally gave me a new heart. And that heart is full of love for him and for Brother Oaks and for all of you.

Most singular event since the Resurrection

Many years ago, I visited for the first time a wooded area of extraordinary natural beauty near Palmyra, New York. This area is known to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the Sacred Grove. On the day of our visit, the bees were kissing the wildflowers, and the soft zephyrs gently rustled the leaves of the great trees. It is a place of perfect peace and serenity. It was easy to believe that the heavens were opened and that the magnificent vision took place there.

I refer to the awesome experience of Joseph Smith when he beheld God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, in the spring of 1820. There has been no event more glorious, more controversial, nor more important in the story of Joseph Smith than this vision. It is possibly the most singular event to occur on the earth since the Resurrection. Those who do not believe it happened find it difficult to explain away. Too much has happened since its occurrence to summarily deny that it ever took place. Some years later, still suffering under the impact of that happening, Joseph said, "If I had not

experienced what I have, I should not have known it myself" (*Millennial Star*, Nov. 1844, p. 93).

The First Vision

Young Joseph Smith, fourteen years of age, lived with his family near Palmyra, New York. In the spring of 1820, Joseph, like many others, was caught up in the religious excitement of the day. Desiring to know the truth for himself, and encouraged by the epistle of James, he knelt in solitary, fervent prayer in that beautiful grove not far from his home. He was at first violently seized by "the power of some actual being from the unseen world" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16). In an effort to extricate himself, he exerted all his powers to call upon God for deliverance from this tremendous evil power. At this point he said:

"Just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17.)

The message that Joseph received from the Father and the Son was that the full truth was not upon the earth and that he should not affiliate with the religions of the day, as well as other

things of transcending importance which were not written.

Joseph stated in that account: "Many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time" (Joseph Smith—History 1:20). Obviously, Joseph was overwhelmed by the occasion and the instructions he received.

Joseph soon declared this marvelous experience to others outside his family. As a result, much ridicule, contempt, and even hatred were visited upon him. His mother, Lucy Mack Smith, relates that after the First Vision, "from this time until the twenty-first of September, 1823, Joseph continued, as usual, to labor with his father, and nothing during this interval occurred of very great importance—though he suffered every kind of opposition and persecution from the different orders of religionists" (*History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Preston Nibley [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958], p. 74). The prejudice and the hatred pursued Joseph until his martyrdom.

Of this experience, Joseph said: "I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision. . . . I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

There are several other accounts of the magnificent vision near Palmyra recorded by the Prophet's associates or friends before the Prophet's death, who, at various times, heard the Prophet recount the First Vision. These accounts corroborate the First Vision as written by Joseph Smith himself.

In the accounts of the Prophet and his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, there is also considerable historical background which has been confirmed by secondary sources as being accurate. As an example, the Prophet refers in the published account of the First Vision to the religious fervor in the area where the Smith family was living at the time. Among others, Brigham Young later affirmed: "I very well recollect the reformation which took place in the country among the various denominations of Christians—the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others—when Joseph was a boy" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:67).

The angel Moroni and the Book of Mormon

Three years following the vision near Palmyra came the visit of the angel Moroni. Later, Joseph received the plates of gold and translated the Book of Mormon from them. He subsequently received the keys and powers of the holy priesthood of God, and established The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Joseph Smith's stated purpose in relating his history was "to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired" (Joseph Smith—History 1:1).

What was learned?

What was learned from the First Vision?

1. The existence of God our Father as a personal being, and proof that man was made in the image of God.
2. That Jesus is a personage, separate and distinct from the Father.
3. That Jesus Christ is declared by the Father to be his Son.
4. That Jesus was the conveyer of revelation as taught in the Bible.
5. The promise of James to ask of God for wisdom was fulfilled.

6. The reality of an actual being from an unseen world who tried to destroy Joseph Smith.

7. That there was a falling away from the Church established by Jesus Christ—Joseph was told not to join any of the sects, for they taught the doctrines of men.

8. Joseph Smith became a witness for God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

Vision confirms revelation through Jesus Christ

The First Vision confirms the fact there are three separate Gods: God the Father—Elohim, to whom we address our prayers; Jesus the Christ—Jehovah; and the Holy Ghost—the Comforter, through whose spirit we may know the truth of all things.

In the account of that profound theophany, the instruction came from Jesus. President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

“I would like to call your attention to one little thing in the first vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is very significant, and Joseph Smith did not know it. If he had been perpetrating a fraud, he would not have thought of it. You will recall in your reading that the Father and the Son appeared, and the Father introduced the Son and told the Prophet to hear the Son.

“Now suppose the Prophet had come back from the woods and had said the Father and the Son appeared to him, and the Father said, ‘Joseph, what do you want?’ and when he asked the question and told him what he wanted, the Father had answered him; then we would know that the story of the Prophet could not be true.

“All revelation comes through Jesus Christ. I have not time to go into the scriptures and give references for that, but that is the fact” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.], 1957–66, 1:16).

What resulted from First Vision?

What resulted from the First Vision, which opened the prophesied dispensation of the fulness of times?

1. The Book of Mormon, another witness for Christ, was received.

2. The priesthood, or authority to perform saving ordinances, was restored, including the sealing powers of the priesthood.

3. The Church of Jesus Christ was again organized on the earth.

4. Revelations came to the Prophet Joseph Smith for the building of the kingdom of God upon the earth, declaring the universal salvation of mankind.

5. Keys, principles, and powers were restored for the carrying out of the three great missions of the Church—the preaching of the gospel, the means of perfecting the Saints, and temples and ordinances therein for the redemption of the living and the dead.

What of Joseph Smith?

What of this man Joseph Smith who communed with deity? What was his reputation? What effect, if any, did the great vision near Palmyra seem to have upon him? As promised by the angel Moroni, both good and evil have been spoken of him since. The *New York Sun* in the late summer of 1843 said:

“That Joe Smith, the founder of the Mormons, is a man of great talent, a deep thinker, an eloquent speaker, an able writer, and a man of great mental power, no one can doubt who has watched his career. That his followers are deceived, we all believe. . . .

“Few in this age have done such deeds, and performed such apparent miracles. It is no small thing, in the blaze of this nineteenth century, to give to men a new revelation, found a new religion, establish new forms of worship, to build a city, with new laws, institutions, and orders of architecture,—to establish ecclesiastic, civil

and military jurisdiction, found colleges, send out missionaries, and make proselytes in two hemispheres: yet all this has been done by Joe Smith, and that against every sort of opposition, ridicule and persecution" (*History of the Church*, 6:3).

A Mr. Reed, a nonmember of the Church, said of him:

"The first acquaintance I had with Gen. Smith, was about the year 1823. He came into my neighborhood, being then about eighteen years of age, and resided there two years; during which time I became intimately acquainted with him. I do know that his character was irreproachable; that he was well known for truth and uprightness; that he moved in the first circles of community, and he was often spoken of as a young man of intelligence, and good morals, and possessing a mind susceptible of the highest intellectual attainments" (*Times and Seasons*, 1 June 1844, p. 549).

Josiah Quincy, mayor of Boston, said of him, "A fine-looking man is what the passer-by would instinctively have murmured upon meeting the remarkable individual" (*Figures of the Past* [Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883], p. 381).

Joseph's personal magnetism

William M. Allred, one of his followers, stated that some straitlaced people had problems with the Prophet Joseph playing ball with the boys. Said Allred, referring to the Prophet:

"He then related a story of a certain prophet who was sitting under the shade of a tree amusing himself in some way, when a hunter came along with his bow and arrow, and reproved him. The prophet asked him if he kept his bow strung up all the time. The hunter answered that he did not. The prophet asked why, and he said it would lose its elasticity if he did. The prophet said it was just so with his mind, he did not want it strung up all the time" (*Juvenile Instructor*, 1 Aug. 1892, p. 472).

William Taylor, President John Taylor's brother, said of Joseph Smith's personality: "Much has been said of his geniality and personal magnetism. I was a witness of this—people, old or young, loved him and trusted him instinctively." He explains, "My devotion to the Prophet was akin to that felt by all who came under his influence" (*Young Women's Journal*, Dec. 1906, p. 548).

Joseph's personal magnetism was confirmed by his wife Emma in a letter written to one of their sons after the Prophet's death: "I do not expect you can do much more in the garden than your father could, and I never wanted him to go into the garden to work for if he did it would not be fifteen minutes before there would be three or four or sometimes a half dozen men round him and they would tramp the ground down faster than he could hoe it up" (*Emma Smith Papers*, 1 Aug. 1868 or 1869, p. 4, Independence, Missouri: RLDS Library and Archive).

Witnesses to the fruits of his work

The practical sage, Brigham Young, died with the name Joseph upon his lips. He previously had said: "I honor and revere the name of Joseph Smith. I delight to hear it; I love it. I love his doctrine. . . .

"I feel like shouting Hallelujah, all the time, when I think that I ever knew Joseph Smith, the Prophet whom the Lord raised up. . . .

" . . . I am bold to say that, Jesus Christ excepted, no better man ever lived or does live on this earth. I am his witness" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], pp. 458–59).

My associates and I are also his witnesses. We are eyewitnesses of the fruits of this work worldwide. The followers of the restored gospel of Christ can be found in over one hundred countries of the world. In the main they are decent, sober, chaste, honest, law-abiding, family-oriented, patriotic

members of the countries in which they live.

"For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes" (Luke 6:44).

At the very heart of this great work of teaching and establishing the gospel of Christ is the First Vision of the boy Joseph near Palmyra, New York, in 1820. Too much has happened to dismiss this magnificent vision as a non-event.

Since no one was with Joseph when this great vision took place in the wooded grove near Palmyra, a testimony concerning its reality can come only by believing the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's own account or by the witness of the Holy Ghost, or both. I have such a conviction. It is a sure

conviction that lies deep in my soul. As a special witness of the same Christ who appeared with the Father and instructed the boy Joseph Smith, I bear witness of the truthfulness of the magnificent First Vision near Palmyra. I declare this in all soberness and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder James E. Faust, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Angel Abrea

The power of example

A few years ago I found myself in a small city park which was covered with trees and adorned with monuments, a plaza typical of many found throughout Argentina. I was watching a sculptor as he used a hammer and chisel to put the finishing touches on his project. His artwork portrayed a mother holding a child in her arms.

The artist was working to perfect the hands of the mother, which were fashioned of marble, and the results appeared to me to be masterful strokes in the sculptor's own style.

As I stood there fascinated, eager to grasp knowledge of the artist's skills, a shoeshine boy passing by stopped and stood by me. After attentively watching the progress of the final touches for a few moments, the industrious young boy turned to me and in amazement asked, "Sir, tell me, why is he breaking it now?"

The youth's naive and unexpected query gave me cause to contemplate the

examples which we constantly set, the impressions we give by our actions and our behavior. It made me realize how extremely important our examples can be, as is the force or weakness with which we convey our personal convictions in our everyday life.

The words of Paul came to my mind: "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Corinthians 14:8).

According to the radius of our activity, or within our sphere of responsibility, each one of us influences a certain number of God's sons and daughters. Our attitudes, actions, and words convey messages to others which in some way affect their lives, either positively or negatively.

Our actions are the results of our ignorance or the fruits of our knowledge, the results of our disbelief or of the testimony which we possess. We cannot escape from ourselves or from that which we hold in our hearts. We become that which we pursue. The ex-

ample which we set and the life we live are a reflection of all that we truly are.

Negative and positive examples

In the words of counsel which Alma gave to his son, Corianton, we see an illustration of how ill feelings that are harbored in our hearts lead to actions which set bad examples, with consequent adverse effects in the lives of others.

"Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing; suffer not the devil to lead away your heart. . . for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words" (Alma 39:11).

On the other hand, Nephi gives us a very meaningful example of the power of a testimony which produces an attitude of certainty and leaves no room for doubt when he was faced with the request from his father, Lehi. He answered, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7).

He did not say, "I will go and see what happens," or, "I will go and see what the circumstances are," which would have caused confusion and uncertainty; but, rather, his attitude was one of a person who does not doubt, and one who acts accordingly. It is interesting to note that Nephi did not only express his decision and determination to be obedient in carrying out his father's request, but he further explained the reason for acting in this manner when he said, "For I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

On another occasion Nephi received the following assignment from the Lord: "Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee, that I may carry thy people across these waters" (1 Nephi 17:8).

After receiving this commandment, Nephi's reaction was not the usual one that many people would ex-

pect, or that would be a logical response for some: "Look, Lord, I have never before built a ship. I don't know how to do it. That which you ask of me is more than I can do. Furthermore, my brothers will certainly be opposed to this, which will make the task much more difficult. Is there not some other way to accomplish this project?"

No such thoughts were alternatives used by Nephi when he made a decision. His answer was simply, "Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to smelt, that I may make tools to construct the ship?" (1 Nephi 17:9). In these words, Nephi's firm determination and his decision to do what was asked of him are reflected in carrying out the mission which the Lord had assigned to him. Then, in the course of events, when his brothers began to murmur against him and opposed building the ship, he confronted them with the mighty strength of his testimony saying: "If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done."

"And now, if the Lord has such great power, and has wrought so many miracles among the children of men, how is it that he cannot instruct me, that I should build a ship?" (1 Nephi 17:50-51.)

What we treasure in our hearts

Attitudes and actions which produce teaching examples are those which are motivated by a strong testimony.

The convictions which we treasure in our hearts are more important than our very lives if those convictions and treasures are the results of a fervent testimony, one received through revelation. They give us the kind of courage which allows us to face the trials of life with the assurance that our Father in Heaven will approve our actions regardless of the circumstances which

surround us, the ignorance of many, or the hardship of the trials.

In the world today there are millions of people who are ready to do what seems possible, but the prize is for those who are ready to do what seems impossible. If certain things can be done, personal efficiency and skill can carry them through. If it cannot be done, faith and testimony can do it.

Obedience, a constant principle

As sons and daughters of God we have not received the commandments, which show us the way to return to him on a conditional basis, to fulfill only if it seems possible or if ideal circumstances permit.

To be obedient, to do that which the Lord requires of us, has been and always will be a constant principle in the lives of those whom the Lord has called to be his prophets. As an example, we might mention that at one time the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I made this my rule, 'When the Lord commands, do it'" (*History of the Church*, 2:170).

Without any doubt, Joseph Smith was a prophet with a great spirit of accomplishment and tenacity. On one occasion he said to his cousin, George A. Smith: "Never be discouraged. If I were sunk in the lowest pit of Nova Scotia, with the Rocky Mountains piled on me, I would hang on, exercise faith, and keep up good courage, and I would come out on top" (John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet* [New York: MacMillan Co., 1946], p. 9).

The life of the prophet of whom I bear testimony was an example of that which he proclaimed, having always given a clear message of his convictions and testimony.

This kind of determination, an exemplary way of life, is not reserved for only a small minority, as some would believe, but rather it should be the constant attitude of those who desire to follow the Lord's counsel in order to attain the promised blessings: "Be thou

faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

Parents can lead to darkness or salvation

In the scriptures we find examples of how, through their actions, parents can send "messages" into the lives of their children which will lead them into paths of darkness or, on the other hand, which can teach them clearly those things which will lead them into salvation.

Jacob, speaking to the Nephites, told them, "Wherefore, ye shall remember your children, how that ye have grieved their hearts because of the example that ye have set before them; and also, remember that ye may, because of your filthiness, bring your children unto destruction, and their sins be heaped upon your heads at the last day" (Jacob 3:10). The dramatic power of example by parents in the lives of children is clearly demonstrated in those words.

"The uncertain sound of the trumpet"

Sometimes bad examples, or "the uncertain sound of the trumpet," which children receive in the home comes in the form of criticism of Church authorities, or in speaking kind words and thoughts outside the home but within it speaking words which are harsh and brusque. The sound is unclear if children observe the payment of tithing when and if it is convenient, or if they hear justifications for not paying it in moments when faith weakens. It is a distorted sound when they see that observance of the Sabbath depends on which sport event is scheduled for the day, or if the weather is ideal for an outing.

Those who act in this manner can be compared to the person whom President Hugh B. Brown described when he said, "He who knows the precepts and neglects to obey them is like one that lights a candle in the darkness and

then closes his eyes" (*Relief Society Magazine*, Oct. 1969, p. 725).

The sure sound of the trumpet

Now let us consider the sure sound of the trumpet, the other side of the issue, in the example of Joshua. When it became necessary for his people to make a firm commitment and take a definite stand, he said to them in his final speech, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Imagine the impact it would have if every parent took the same attitude and the same determination which Joshua took! What a loud and clear sound the message would have when carried into the lives of the children.

In the building of eternal families, we need more models, we need more guiding lights, and certainly we need fewer excuse-makers and fewer advocates of darkness.

To be saviors of men

It is one thing to talk about the gospel, but it is quite another to live it. It is one thing to preach about Christ, but it is another to follow in his footsteps.

When the gospel is incorporated in the life of each one of us, it molds our decisions and determines our actions.

We become models and examples who can teach others the path to follow leading to life eternal only when we live the principles of the gospel.

In the great mission to which we have been called, to be saviors of men, may we follow the admonition of the Lord:

"Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations" (D&C 115:5).

We cannot fail in that trust because our Savior, Jesus Christ, has shown us by example: "Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you" (3 Nephi 18:16).

We know the goal; we have the example; now let us put forth the effort and make the decision to follow in that path.

"And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved" (2 Nephi 31:16).

In the name of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Angel Abrea, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi

The trauma of death

My friend, Milton, has six children. His lovely wife died in a traffic accident and left him with their beautiful children. One day his six-year-old daughter came to his bedside in tears. Milton thought she had had a fight with her brothers. "No, no, Daddy," she said, "I feel lonely. Where is Mom? I

want to see Mom." Father embraced her and told her, "Your mom is with Heavenly Father now. We will meet Mom again."

The other day, his four-year-old daughter came to her grandma and said, "Will my mom ever come home?" Her grandma embraced and kissed her, saying, "She is with Heavenly Father."

The mother of an eleven-year-old boy became very seriously ill. His father brought her to Salt Lake from Arizona. A few days later, this young boy wrote:

"We all feel now we will take better care of Mama if she comes home soon."

Later he wrote: "We are very lonely without you. . . . We are very busy around here. We received the telegram and were very glad to know that mama was out of danger. . . . I think I will close for it is getting bed time. Sister Allen told us in Religion Class that we should go to bed at eight o'clock so we could have enough sleep. Now it is nearly half past eight. Good bye. Your loving Son, Spencer Kimball" (quoted in Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977], p. 45).

The very next day after he mailed this letter his mother passed away. The next day their bishop received a telegram, and all of the Kimball children were called out of school. They all ran home, and the bishop told them, "Your Ma is dead." President Kimball later told of that incident:

"It came as a thunderbolt. I ran from the house out in the backyard to be alone in my deluge of tears. Out of sight and sound, away from everybody, I sobbed and sobbed. Each time I said the word 'Ma' fresh floods of tears gushed forth until I was drained dry. Ma—dead! But she couldn't be! Life couldn't go on for us. . . . My eleven-year-old heart seemed to burst" (*Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 46).

Why adversity?

Why death? Why sickness? Why tragedies? Why must I have suffering, and disappointment? Why must I have to face the "deep waters" of life? Why must I go through "the rivers of sorrow"? (See "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 66.)

When I was five, my father passed away, and we four children became fa-

therless, because of World War II. Our lives drastically changed; we became so poor. One day I clearly remember: I was playing at the park, and every boy was playing with his father, but I didn't have one. I said to myself, "I wish I could have my father."

We know little of the will of the Lord, yet we judge the Lord often with our small wisdom. I speak to those who now walk the deep water of life or the rivers of sorrow. I testify to you that the Lord loves you, and Jesus Christ will never forget you! The Lord has said, "My son [or daughter], . . . all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

Elder Spencer W. Kimball said: "Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 98).

I repeat: "Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, long-suffering, and self-mastery," as long as we live righteously.

Let's all learn from my friend Mick. One day he was swimming at a party given by the company for which he was working that summer in Nebraska. He dove into the water and hit a shallow spot very hard. A broken neck was his diagnosis, and his whole body was immediately paralyzed. He even lost the capacity to breathe. The doctor said, "He may not make it through the night."

He had earned a B.A. degree in political science after serving a mission in Japan. At the time of this tragic accident he had just one year left in law school at BYU. He was married and had two children. This tragic accident changed his whole life, as if from day to night. He wasn't sure whether he would make it until the next day. It was

inconceivable, the emotional and physical pain that he must go through as a quadriplegic.

Even though he was in this condition in the University of Utah Medical Center, he was determined to graduate from law school. It was an almost impossible task, but good friends, true Samaritans, brought him notes and taped lectures from Provo. Oh, God bless these true Christians. He turned pages by a mouthstick, and if his book flipped shut, he waited for a long time until someone came to help him.

Finally, he graduated from law school, passed the Utah bar exam, and became a licensed attorney. While he was studying, exercising, and maintaining doctor's contact to gain strength, his wife took his two sons and divorced him. This was the most "sorrowful and very heavy" period of his life. (Matthew 26:37.) But he never complained and even blessed the leaving loved ones. In his heart he prayed, "Thy will be done, O Lord!" (Matthew 26:42). It was his own Garden of Gethsemane, and he took his own cup and drank it as his blessing.

In the hymn "How Firm a Foundation" we sing these words:

When through the deep waters I
call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not thee
o'erflow,
For I will be with thee, thy
troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest
distress.
(*Hymns*, no. 66.)

My friend Mick met a most beautiful lady, Cheryl. They married and now the greatest joy has come to their lives. His wife is expecting a baby. It is a miracle. The Lord said, "I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless." Last Friday, they were sealed in the temple for time and for all eternity. It was my privilege to perform the ceremony for this beautiful couple.

His stake president, President Banks, described him as "a most

humble person with strong faith," and his secretary said of him, "Time has always been important to him. A span of a few brief seconds means the difference. He has no wasted time. He has accomplished more than ever."

The power to love

The Lord said, "The power is in us." (See D&C 58:28.) You and I have that power, the greatest power, the power of love. We can feel the Lord's love if we but listen. Our kindly Heavenly Father gave us—

The power to love!
The power to think!
The power to have faith!
The power to pray!
The power to create!
The power to see!
The power to feel!
The power to touch!
The power to speak!
The power to care!
The power to have concern!
The power to share!
The power to give!
The power to thank!
(Yoshihiko Kikuchi, "Blessings," 1978.)

Especially the power to love! Love is the greatest gift of God. Brothers and sisters, if you and I have this power, the power of love, we can walk with His Spirit, even through the "troubled waters."

Count your blessings

Let us count our blessings:

When upon life's billows you are
tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged,
thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings; name
them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the
Lord has done.

Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.

Count your blessings;
See what God hath done.
Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.
Count you many blessings;
See what God hath done.

Are you ever burdened with a load
of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are
called to bear?
Count your many blessings; every
doubt will fly,
And you will be singing as the
days go by.

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So amid the conflict, whether great
or small,
Do not be discouraged; God is
over all.
Count your many blessings; angels
will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your
journey's end.
("When Upon Life's Billows,"
Hymns, no. 202.)

Let us not judge the Lord's great
wisdom with our small minds.

The Savior is extending his loving hands

Are you unloved? Are you unhappy? Are you handicapped? Divorced? Are you paralyzed like my friend? Are you angry? Do you hate someone? Do you have bitterness toward someone? Are you a single mother because your husband just took off? Are you lonely because your husband passed away? The Savior said:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30.)

I bear you my testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He himself testified of his great, sacred mission when he appeared to the Nephites: "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world" (3 Nephi 11:14).

I know that he lives; I know that he loves us; and I bear you my witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which Elder John K. Carmack, who was sustained yesterday as a new member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will represent his associates in addressing us.

The Choir and congregation sang
"Redeemer of Israel."

Elder John K. Carmack

Expressions of love, gratitude, and support

What makes it possible for me to stand here, I think, is that you are all great friends.

In the Lord's special revelation on government in the Church, he says that the First Presidency is upheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the Church. (See D&C 107:22.) On behalf of these six who have just been called,

I would like to express to the First Presidency our confidence, our faith, and our prayers. We love the First Presidency, and we appreciate the confidence they have in us. I would also like to thank those of you who have expressed your confidence to us. It's the only possible way we can do this work. We have felt a rich outpouring of your love, and that has been an outstanding experience.

I would like you also to know that we have felt the love of the Saints throughout the Church. And especially on behalf of myself, I feel the love of my fellow California Saints, who are here in such great number, and of those great Saints in Idaho—and if I could be allowed a point of personal privilege, of those great missionaries of the Idaho Boise Mission. I feel their strength. Of course, our families are the essential cornerstone of that sustaining love. It's tremendous to belong to this great church.

Qualification for the work

Now, as to the calling, the awesome calling which has come. The Seventy are called to preach the gospel and to be especial witnesses unto the Gentiles and all the world. As I have searched my heart, I think the only qualification I can think of—and I believe I speak on behalf of my brethren—is that we have an especially strong witness of this work.

I testify to two things. One is that there is a real Jesus the Christ. He has a personal interest in each one of us. And secondly, if we seek him, he brings to us the peace which passeth all understanding.

Witness of First Vision

Last October I was on a trip across the mission. I was near a little town called Fairfield, Idaho, and I was reviewing the scriptures. I was reviewing the account of the First Vision, which I had asked all of our missionaries to memorize, found in the Pearl of Great

Price. And as I reviewed that beautiful account from memory, I had a singular experience.

There came to me a very, very special witness that what was recounted by Joseph Smith in those words which he wrote in the Pearl of Great Price was exactly what happened. In a sense, I experienced, as it were, the First Vision myself. And I became a witness to it, a personal witness, through the power of the Holy Ghost. I bear you that witness that the Father and the Son did appear to Joseph Smith the Prophet. I imagine that my experience was very similar to that which many of you have had.

When President Hinckley called Thursday afternoon (that's when we had the first inkling that some change was coming up in our lives), he said, "Brother John, I'd like to interview you and Sister Carmack. I'd like to have you take the first flight out tomorrow morning and meet me in my office." Then he added, "Don't worry about this." That was a big, big help.

Peace through early morning prayers

The medicine didn't work. We worried. But during the early morning hours, the Savior's Holy Spirit reached us and comforted us. We felt peace. It became possible to rest.

May I suggest to all of the Church, and particularly to you young people and you missionaries throughout the world, don't neglect those early morning prayers to our Heavenly Father. Through those prayers, you reach him, and through that, you can have peace.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Preparation for godhood

I think it was C. S. Lewis—I believe he was quoting George MacDonald—who said that we are like

a house. When Christ comes in, it hurts abominably. We knew the roof and the gutters needed fixing, Lewis said, but all of a sudden we find that he starts putting up a new story here, and he shoots out a new wing there. We knew that the cottage needed fixing and those things needed doing, but this? (See *Mere Christianity* [New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1943], p. 174.) Well, Christ's love can be tough. What is he trying to do with us? In his best seller, *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), Dr. M. Scott Peck said that no matter how much we may pussyfoot around it, all who ask the question "What is God's love leading to?" come to a single terrifying conclusion: God wants us to become like himself. We are being prepared for godhood, and it hurts; it hurts abominably, but there is peace.

In those early morning hours, there came to my mind the theme from Ralph Rodgers's play *III Nephi*:

I feel my Savior's love in all the
world around me. . . .
He knows I will follow him, give
all my life to him.
I feel the Savior's love, the love
He freely gives me.
("I Feel My Savior's Love," *The
Choirbook*, pp. 36-37.)

On behalf of these brethren who have joined me, we pledge our energy, our love, our prayers, our faith, in humble obedience to a call we did not seek, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder John K. Carmack, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp, general president of the Young Women, will now speak to us. She will be followed by Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Sister Ardeth G. Kapp

Desire to know and do Lord's will

My brothers and sisters, my heart is full of joy today, and I commend the great and noble leadership of those in the past who have done so much to put the foundation in place for the youth of today. My heart resounds to the heritage left us by those in years gone by, and now, on the threshold of today, I feel my heart saying, "O youth of the noble birthright, Carry on, carry on, carry on!" (Firm As the Mountains Around Us," *Hymns*, no. 42).

In times of great joy and struggle and disappointment, my great companion, Heber, and I have come to know the Lord and felt his Spirit in our home and in our lives. We have known that peace "which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) in times of disappointment and in times of

great blessings. In our home, I think perhaps the phrase used most frequently by my husband is, "I want to know the Lord's will, and I want to carry it out." And I repeat that and add my commitment to what he has taught me by his example.

Heritage and parents' testament

Today I reflect on my early ancestor, John P. Greene, who received the Book of Mormon from Samuel Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith's brother. John gave it to his wife, Rhoda Young, who then passed it on to her brothers, Phineas Young and Brigham Young. I remember that John was the marshal in Nauvoo, and I rejoice in the heritage of faithful Latter-day Saints down through the years.

I am grateful to my father and my mother, who, before passing on, wrote in their last will and testament not what you would expect—of material things, for they had few—rather, they left with us in their last will and testament a statement of their testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, their most precious possession. And now I think of the lines of that poem which says:

To every young woman: we love you, we believe in you

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flander's fields.
(John McCrae, "In Flanders Fields," quoted in Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*, p. 912.)

We'll not break faith, none of us. This is a generation of hope and faith and aspirations, and as leaders of young women throughout the world, our prayer is to live so that God's divine intervention will be felt in our hearts, in our actions, in our attitudes, and in our deeds, and that our receptivity to the priesthood power and direction will be sensitive and responsive. The forces of evil are so real today, and the subtleties of deceit would strive to divert us from the promises and blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To the young women of the Church, and to a little Beehive girl who came up today and shook my hand and said, "I'm twelve years old and I'm a

Beehive," to every young woman in every corner of the Church, I say, we love you, we need you, we care about you, we believe in you, and the goal of eternal life is not beyond our reach.

Expression of commitment

It has been my privilege to know of the power and strength of the Brethren who sit in the councils of the Church, guiding this great work in these latter days. And we're part of that great work. We'll work to have every young woman throughout the Church stand in the valiant ranks of loyalty, commitment, and dedication. Mothers, stand firm; and fathers, have courage to be strong. Leaders, support those great parents. And together in unity we'll prepare a generation that will be prepared for the Lord's commendation, that he may have a house of worthy members when he returns.

To this solemn and sacred trust, I commit all of my energies and my efforts. I rejoice in the opportunity to be a part of this great work, and bear my testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Sister Ardeth Kapp, the new general president of the Young Women, has just spoken to us.

Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Before I begin my prepared message, I would personally like to thank two great women for their devoted years of service. Sister Smith and Sister Cannon, you have been like great beacons of light to guide the women of the

Church and many, many others from troubled seas into a safe harbor. May God continue to bless you that your inspiration and encouragement will continue to be felt by the women of the world.

Sharing, serving, teaching, praying together

The Savior had such a short time to prepare those who would carry on His work after His earthly ministry. He must have felt the pressure of this responsibility. His teachings during those final hours have always been special to me. They represent His final instruction to those who would now be responsible to carry on the work.

Throughout His ministry, the Savior encouraged us to do the things that we had seen him do. After celebrating the feast of the Passover at the Last Supper, He went to each of His disciples and washed their feet. After this act of service, His instructions were:

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

It is evident, then, that if the Master served, we should serve. If He taught, we should teach. If He prayed, we should also pray. He knew that if we would catch the spirit of His ministry, our hearts and our souls would be so full of that which we had received that we could not be content unless we were sharing, serving, teaching, and praying together.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations"

As Matthew completed His Gospel, he recorded this instruction of the Lord to His disciples:

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

"And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:16-20).

When light of gospel permeates the soul

The scriptures are replete with examples of what happens to individuals when the light of the gospel really permeates their souls. Let us just consider two examples. The first is from the New Testament. There is a story in the book of John about two disciples who followed John the Baptist. Again from the scripture:

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, . . . Master, where dwellest thou?

"He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the . . . Christ" (John 1:35-41).

When Andrew had received something special in his life, he wanted to share it with his brother, and could not rest until he had found him and told him he had found the Lord.

Book of Mormon example

There is another great example in the Book of Mormon about Alma and the sons of Mosiah. They were numbered among those who were seeking to destroy the Church, and were using much flattery of speech to lead the people into doing all manner of iniquity.

uity. After the pleadings of Alma's father, the Lord interceded and called Alma to repentance.

It is most interesting to see what occurred when the light of the gospel came into his life. From the Book of Mosiah we read:

"And now it came to pass that Alma began from this time forward to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them" (Mosiah 27:32).

And then, speaking of the four sons of Mosiah, the scripture says:

"And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of king Mosiah, zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them.

"And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer.

"And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth" (Mosiah 27:35-37.)

Older couples who share

After conversion comes the desire to share—not so much out of a sense of duty, even though that responsibility falls on the priesthood, but out of a sincere love and appreciation for that which has been received. When such a "pearl of great price" comes into our lives, we cannot be content just to admire it by ourselves. It must be shared! And here is the great joy and happiness of the gift!

I have especially been impressed with the older couples who, after fulfilling a life of service in their wards and stakes, have the desire to spend a period of time as missionaries in full service to the Lord. I have found them in all corners of the world, and they are, I guess, the happiest people I have ever met because of what they are accomplishing.

Let me just share parts of some letters written by those who have had this great privilege. These quotations are from a composite of letters. They were written to their mission president and his wife after the couples had been serving in the mission field for some time.

"We never asked to be sent on a mission. We didn't feel qualified. My husband had had only four years of formal education, and was very sensitive about that. He read a lot and was very successful in business. He had a special personality which drew people to him. Several couples we knew had gone on missions, and we were happy for them. When the bishop called us into his office and said that he had been praying for two weeks and that the Lord wanted us to go on a mission, we were overwhelmed. We accepted, as we knew it was from the Lord.

"My husband's back was in poor condition. He had asked for a little time to see if he could find a doctor who could help him in some way. The doctor's response was, 'Just go home and learn to live with the pain.' When we were set apart for our mission, my husband was promised that he would be blessed with better health. The promise was literally fulfilled.

"We entered the Missionary Training Center. Those few weeks we spent were very special to us. It was difficult for us to learn the discussions, but we found a close relationship with the Lord. As we did the very best we could, He blessed us. We knew we would have to rely on the Lord to help us after we had done all we could.

"There is a feeling of love and closeness at the MTC that cannot be

found in any other place. We went to the temple each week. We found that, next to the temple, the MTC was the closest to being near our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, that you could possibly find here on earth.

"The privilege of serving a full-time mission together was an outstanding time in our lives. It was a time during which we drew close together as we studied and prayed so much together. We learned more fully to depend upon one another. We found great joy in becoming more aware of one another's strengths. We anticipated the opportunity of helping each other overcome our weaknesses. In the autumn of our lives, it was a time of ripening and cementing together. This is an experience every couple should have if they are physically able and can financially afford it.

"If they can't afford it, their families would be greatly blessed if they would assist them. It would be much better than giving them a trip to Hawaii or Europe."

One couple then reported, as they concluded their mission, that in the final testimony meeting these words were spoken of them: "Dear elder and sister, you just can't imagine what our life was like before you came."

Challenge of returning home

Of course, returning home after such an experience is a challenge. I met a good brother coming out of the Mormon Handicraft store just before Christmas. He had been in buying his wife a Christmas present. As I was coming down the street, he ran up to me and said, "Don't you remember me?" I had to be prompted a little. When we last met, it was in the mission field. Living conditions were certainly not like home. But there was a radiance about him and his wife as we had opportunity to be with them for a day and witness their work.

I said to him, "It must be great to be back home." He hesitated a minute, and then said, "You know, I've had a

difficult time adjusting. I feel that we should be back among the Saints in the Philippines. They needed us so much. I don't find that same need here. Can't you send us back on another mission?"

Climax golden years with gospel service

Mission presidents always respond the same when I ask them the following question: "What can I do for you?" The response invariably is, "Send us more missionary couples."

Now, to all you great couples who are hearing my voice today, I want you to listen especially to these words. Life has been hard. I know that. You have worked diligently for the security you now enjoy. You have struggled, reared a family, and saved something to have and to enjoy during this golden period of your life. But just sitting around will not give you what you really desire. Climax these golden years with the soul-satisfying experience of full-time gospel service.

I hear you stand and bear your testimonies, acknowledging your love for your companion and for the gospel. If that is really true, you will be like Andrew or Alma—not content until you have shared the fulfillment you have found in the gospel of Jesus Christ in missionary service.

President Heber J. Grant has said:

"I feel sorry for the man or the woman who has never experienced the sweet joy which comes to the missionary who proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ, who brings honest souls to a knowledge of the truth, and who hears the expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving that come from the hearts of those who have been brought by his labor to a comprehension of life eternal. So also do I feel sorry for those who have never experienced the sweet joy resulting from reaching out their hands and helping those who were needy. Assuredly there is more blessing comes to us from giving than in accumulating; there is no question of this in my mind. There is also more

blessing comes to us in going forth to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and laboring for the salvation of the souls of men, than can possibly come to us by merely having a knowledge of the truth of our religion, and then remaining at home to mingle and labor in the ordinary affairs of life, and accumulate the wealth of this world that perishes with the using. One great trouble is that we oftentimes lose sight of what is the most valuable labor for us to perform, the labor that will be most pleasing in the sight of our Heavenly Father" (*Gospel Standards*, comp. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1969], p. 104).

Need their maturity, wisdom, and experience

Bishops, will you please give more encouragement to the healthy, retired, or soon-to-be retired couples who are considering missions? Many are awaiting your call, reluctant to come forward and ask. How we need their maturity, their wisdom, and their experience in our rapidly growing Church!

Bishops, instill in these couples a desire and the confidence that they will need for this exciting service. They will not be expected to learn the same program as our young missionaries. Let them know that we want to utilize the talents they already possess after a lifetime of growth and development.

May the Lord bless you great, mature couples in the Church with an earnest desire to be anxiously engaged in His service.

I leave you my witness of the truthfulness of this great work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Thank the Lord for a powerful voice at the right time. We have just heard from Elder L. Tom Perry, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during these sessions of this general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined single adult and Salt Lake Institute choir, and the father-son priesthood choir that we enjoyed so much last evening, and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference to many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Come, Follow Me."

The benediction will be offered by Elder F. Burton Howard, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

"I love them"

My brethren and sisters, President Benson said, with a slip of the tongue, that we would hear from President Kimball. I wish with all my heart that we might do so. I wish that he were standing here addressing us as the prophet of the Lord.

As you know, he is now in his ninetieth year. His life has been rich and fruitful, and we have been the beneficiaries of his great and dedicated leadership.

I said to him, a little bit ago, as we looked over this vast congregation, "President, these people all love you."

He said, "I love them." I hope that you will accept that as his address to you this afternoon as we come to the conclusion of this great general conference. "I love them."

A remarkable conference

We have enjoyed a conference that has been remarkable, I think, in a number of ways. The naming of two men to the Council of the Twelve on one occasion is something that has not happened in a long while. The last time it happened was forty years ago, when President Kimball and President Benson were so named.

We have added to the First Quorum of the Seventy a group of tried and tested men of faith and leadership who will greatly assist the work. I wish that we might have heard from each of them. We have announced the construction of five new temples. That will make a total of twenty-five new temples either recently completed or in course of construction. There has been nothing like it ever before in the history of the Church or of the world.

While President Kimball is unable to stand at this pulpit and speak to us, we are on occasion able to converse with him, and he has given his authori-

zation to that which has been done. We would not have proceeded without this.

Great things grow from small acts

Now we are ready to return to our homes. We have been counseled by the Brethren and have been strengthened in our faith. As we are about to separate, I should like to emphasize the importance of watching the little things in our lives. Have you ever noticed a large gate in a farm fence? As you open it or close it there appears to be very little movement at the hinge. But there is great movement at the perimeter.

Speaking to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1831, the Lord said: "Out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33). It is so with good or evil, my brothers and sisters. Small, kind acts can grow into mammoth good institutions. The Boy Scout movement is an example of this as is known by anyone acquainted with the history of this great institution. It is so likewise with evil things. Small acts of dishonesty, small acts of an immoral nature, small outbursts of anger can grow into great and terrible things.

Drama of great tragedy

There stood once on the grounds right here, before ever this building was constructed, a bowery—a rather crude structure in which the Saints met in those days of their poverty. In September of 1857, there was presented in that old bowery on a Sunday afternoon, what was really the concluding act of a drama of great tragedy.

On that Sunday Brigham Young was conducting a meeting and introduced to the congregation a man who appeared to be old and infirm and weary of life.

Said President Brigham Young to the congregation:

"Brother Thomas B. Marsh, formerly the President of the Quorum of

Sunday, April 8

Second Day

the Twelve Apostles, has now come to us, after an absence of nearly nineteen years. He is on the stand to-day, and wishes to make a few remarks to the congregation. . . .

"He came into my office and wished to know whether I could be reconciled to him, and whether there could be a reconciliation between himself and the Church of the living God. He reflected for a moment and said, I am reconciled to the Church, but I want to know whether the Church can be reconciled to me.

"He is here," said President Young, "and I want him to say what he may wish to. . . . Brethren and sisters, I now introduce to you Brother Thomas B. Marsh. When the Quorum of the Twelve was first organized, he was appointed to be their President."

Brother Marsh rose to the pulpit. This man, who was named the first President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and to whom the Lord had spoken in so marvelous a manner, as recorded in section 112 of the Doctrine and Covenants—which I wish you would read—said to the people:

"I do not know that I can make all this vast congregation hear and understand me. My voice never was very strong, but it has been very much weakened of late years by the afflicting rod of Jehovah. He loved me too much to let me go without whipping. I have seen the hand of the Lord in the chastisement which I have received. I have seen and known that it has proved he loved me; for if he had not cared anything about me, he would not have taken me by the arm and given me such a shaking.

"If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping, if you are such as the Lord loves. But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities; but if you go away and the Lord loves you as much as he did me, he will whip you back again.

"Many have said to me," he continued, "'How is it that a man like you, who understood so much of the revela-

tions of God as recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, should fall away?' I told them not to feel too secure, but to take heed lest they also should fall; for I had no scruples in my mind as to the possibility of men falling away."

He continued, "I can say, in reference to the Quorum of the Twelve, to which I belonged, that I did not consider myself a whit behind any of them, and I suppose that others had the same opinion; but, let no one feel too secure; for, before you think of it, your steps will slide. You will not then think nor feel for a moment as you did before you lost the Spirit of Christ; for when men apostatize, they are left to grovel in the dark" (*Journal of Discourses*, 5:206).

Speaking in a voice that was difficult to hear, and appearing as an old man when he was actually only fifty-seven years of age, he spoke of the travails through which he had passed before he had finally made his way to the valley of the Great Salt Lake and asked that he might be baptized again into the Church.

I wondered, as I read that story so filled with pathos, what had brought him to this sorry state. I discovered it, in the *Journal of Discourses*, in a talk given to the Saints in this same bowery the year before by George A. Smith. I think, if you'll bear with me for a minute or two, it is worth the telling to illustrate to all of us the need to be careful in dealing with small matters which can lead to great consequences.

According to the account given by George A. Smith, while the Saints were in Far West, Missouri, "the wife of Thomas B. Marsh, who was then President of the Twelve Apostles, and Sister Harris concluded they would exchange milk, in order to make a little larger cheese than they otherwise could. To be sure to have justice done, it was agreed that they should not save the strippings [to themselves], but that the milk and strippings should all go together. . . ."

Now for you who have never been around a cow, I should say that the

strippings came at the end of the milking and were richer in cream.

"Mrs. Harris, it appeared, was faithful to the agreement and carried to Mrs. Marsh the milk and strippings, but Mrs. Marsh, wishing to make some extra good cheese, saved a pint of strippings from each cow and sent Mrs. Harris the milk without the strippings."

A quarrel arose, and the matter was referred to the home teachers. They found Mrs. Marsh guilty of failure to keep her agreement. She and her husband were upset and, "an appeal was taken from the teacher to the bishop, and a regular Church trial was had. President Marsh did not consider that the bishop had done him and his lady justice for they [that is, the bishop's court] decided that the strippings were wrongfully saved, and that the woman had violated her covenant.

"Marsh immediately took an appeal to the High Council, who investigated the question with much patience, and," says George A. Smith, "I assure you they were a grave body. Marsh being extremely anxious to maintain the character of his wife, . . . made a desperate defence, but the High Council finally confirmed the bishop's decision.

"Marsh, not being satisfied, took an appeal to the First Presidency of the Church, and Joseph and his Counselors had to sit upon the case, and they approved the decision of the High Council.

"This little affair," Brother Smith continues, ". . . kicked up a considerable breeze, and Thomas B. Marsh then declared that he would sustain the character of his wife, even if he had to go to hell for it.

"The then President of the Twelve Apostles, the man who should have been the first to do justice and cause reparation to be made for wrong, committed by any member of his family, took that position, and what next? He went before a magistrate and swore that the 'Mormons' were hostile towards the state of Missouri.

"That affidavit brought from the government of Missouri an exterminating order, which drove some 15,000 Saints from their homes and habitations, and some thousands perished through suffering the exposure consequent on this state of affairs" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:283-84). Such is George A. Smith's account.

What a very small and trivial thing—a little cream over which two women quarreled. But it led to, or at least was a factor in, Governor Boggs' cruel exterminating order which drove the Saints from the state of Missouri, with all of the terrible suffering and consequent death that followed. The man who should have settled this little quarrel, but who, rather, pursued it, troubling the officers of the Church, right up to the Presidency, literally went through hell for it. He lost his standing in the Church. He lost his testimony of the gospel. For nineteen years he walked in poverty and darkness and bitterness, experiencing illness, and loneliness. He grew old before his time. Finally, like the prodigal son in the parable of the Savior (see Luke 15:11-32), he recognized his foolishness and painfully made his way to this valley, and asked Brigham Young to forgive him and permit his rebaptism into the Church. He had been the first President of the Council of the Twelve, loved, respected, and honored in the days of Kirtland, and the early days of Far West. Now he asked only that he might be ordained a deacon and become a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord.

Admonition to live gospel

We have all seen cases somewhat similar in our own time. I mention the matter only as a reminder to each of us that as we leave this great and inspirational conference we go with resolution in our hearts to live the gospel, to be faithful and true, to have the strength to look above small things that could lead to argument and trouble, to be forgiv-

ing one to another, to "look to God and live" (Alma 37:47).

It is so easy to stumble. It is sometimes so hard to keep our voices low when small things provoke us.

Let us rather remember always that we are sons and daughters of God, children born with a divine birthright, partakers of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, the beneficiaries of the priesthood restored by the Almighty for the blessing of his sons and daughters. Let us, my brethren and sisters, walk with integrity and honesty in all of our dealings one with another. Let us subdue any arrogance or pride and walk humbly before God, and with apprecia-

tion and respect for all with whom we associate.

May the blessings of the Lord attend you, beloved associates. May the peace of the Lord be in your homes and love for him reside in your hearts. God be with you, till we meet again, I humbly pray as I give you my testimony of the truth and divinity of this work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The Choir sang "Come, Follow Me."

Elder F. Burton Howard offered the benediction.

SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CHOIR AND ORGAN BROADCAST

The following broadcast, announced by J. Spencer Kinard and originating with KSL Radio and Television, Salt Lake City, Utah, was presented from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 8, 1984, through the courtesy of the Columbia Broadcasting System's network throughout the United States, parts of Canada, and through other facilities to several points overseas:

Announcer: Once more we welcome you within these walls with Music and the Spoken Word from the crossroads of the West.

CBS and its affiliated stations bring you at this hour the Mormon Tabernacle Choir from Temple Square in Salt Lake City, with Jerold Ottley conducting the Choir, John Longhurst, Tabernacle organist, and the Spoken Word given by Spencer Kinard.

Today's broadcast opens with Robert Manookin's festival anthem for organ, choir, and congregation based on Psalm 149:

"Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song. . . .

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: . . . let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. . . .

Let them praise his name. . . ."

(Choir: "Psalm 149"—Manookin)

Announcer: With Robert Cundick now joining John Longhurst to provide four-hand organ accompaniment, the remainder of today's broadcast is devoted with narration to excerpts from Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*.

The story revolves around one of the great miracles of the Old Testament, as the people of Israel try to decide which God to worship—Baal, the Sun-god or the Lord God Jehovah. We first hear the people crying for help to end a terrible drought and famine.

(Choir: "Help, Lord"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And it came to pass that during the time of famine, the prophet Elijah stood before King Ahab, and Ahab accused Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"

And Elijah answered, "I have not troubled Israel; it is thou Ahab and thy

father's house. Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and followed Baal."

Elijah asked the people of Israel and all the prophets of Baal to gather unto Mount Carmel, "Then we shall see whose God is Lord."

And when they were all gathered and the altar prepared, Elijah challenged the priests. "Lift up your voices and call ye on the name of your Gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord Jehovah; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And the priest began to cry unto Baal their God.

(Choir: "Baal, we cry to thee"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And it came to pass, after nothing happened, Elijah mocked the priests and told them to cry louder to their God, that perhaps "he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or, peradventure, he sleepeth; so awaken him. Call him louder!"

(Choir: "Call Him Louder"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: Then Elijah said unto all the people, "Come near unto me." And he prayed: "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; O hear and answer me." And the people bowed in supplication.

(Choir: "Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And after Elijah had repaired the altar, he implored the Lord to accept his sacrifice saying that "I have done all these things at thy word." Then the fire of the Lord fell. And when the

people saw it they said, "The Lord, he is God." Then Elijah prayed again. "O thou, who makest thine angels spirits; Thou, whose ministers are flaming fires; Let them now descend!"

(Choir: "The Fire Descends from Heaven"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: And after the prophets of Baal were destroyed, the people of Israel marveled at the might and power of God. Elijah again prayed for relief from the terrible drought that lay upon the land. When at length his prayer was answered, the rains came, the people rejoiced and praised God saying:

(Choir: "Thanks Be to God!"—Mendelssohn)

Announcer: Again we leave you from within the shadows of the everlasting hills. May peace be with you this day . . . and always.

Announcer (on radio): This concludes the two-thousand, eight-hundred, fifty-first performance continuing the fifty-fifth year of this traditional broadcast from the Mormon Tabernacle on Temple Square, brought to you by CBS and its affiliated stations, originating with Station KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Jerold Ottley conducted the Choir, Robert Cundick and John Longhurst were at the organ, the Spoken Word was given by Spencer Kinard.

In another seven days at this same hour, Music and the Spoken Word will be heard again from the crossroads of the West.

This is the CBS Radio Network.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for the Saturday morning, Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon sessions of the conference with Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger conducting.

The music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a combined Salt Lake Institute Choir and single adult choir from the Ensign, Rose Park, Liberty, Pioneer, Monument Park, Granite, Holladay, Olym-

pus, Bonneville, and Millcreek Utah regions, directed by Ronald Horton.

At the general priesthood meeting a father-son priesthood choir from the Cache Utah, Cache Utah South, Logan Utah, Logan Utah University, and Smithfield Utah regions furnished the music, directed by Willard R. Kesling and Brent Farley.

Prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ throughout the conference sessions were played by Robert Cundick, John Longhurst, and Clay Christiansen, Tabernacle organists.

Francis M. Gibbons
Clerk of the Conference

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